

# THE NORTHEASTERN ANARCHIST

issue #2 summer 2001

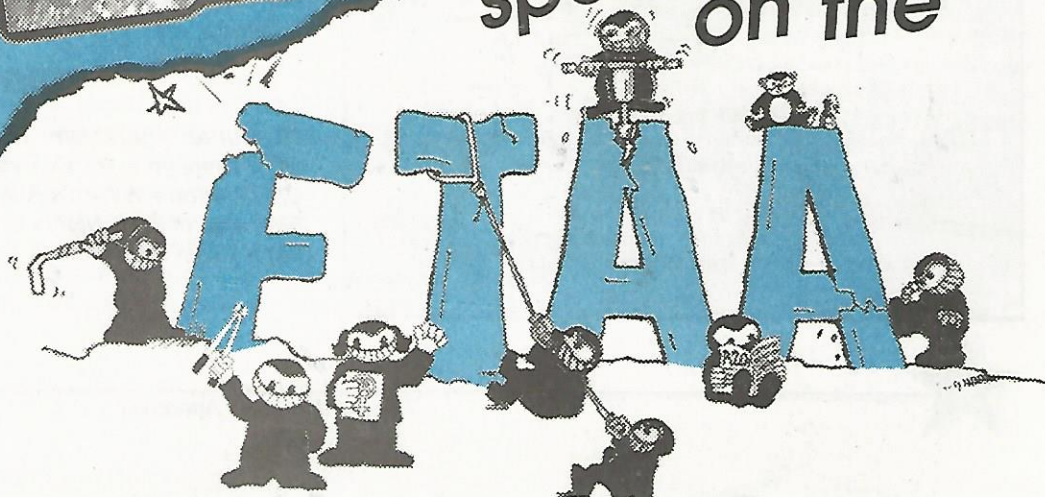
Magazine of the Northeastern Federation of Anarcho-Communists

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# The Northeastern Anarchist

The Northeastern Anarchist is the English-language magazine of the Northeastern Federation of Anarcho-Communists (NEFAC), covering news of revolutionary resistance from the region and around the globe, and publishing class struggle anarchist theory, history and analysis in an effort to further develop anarchist communist ideas and practice.

The Northeastern Federation of Anarcho-Communists (NEFAC) is a bi-lingual (French and English) organization of revolutionaries from the northeastern region of North America who identify with the communist tradition within anarchism. The federation is organized around the principles of theoretical coherence, tactical unity, collective responsibility and federalism. Our activities include study and theoretical development, anarchist agitation and propaganda, and intervention within the class struggle.

As anarcho-communists, we struggle for a classless, stateless and non-hierarchical society. We envision an international confederation of directly democratic, self-managed communities and workplaces; a society where all markets, exchange value, systems of wages and divisions of labor have been abolished and the means production and distribution are socialized in order to allow for the satisfaction of human needs, adhering to the communist principle: "From each according to ability, to each according to need."

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# Where Do We Go Now?

## Towards a Fresh Revolutionary Strategy

by Northeastern Federation of Anarcho-Communists (NEFAC)

After Québec, many are asking where to next? Some are already gearing up for the World Bank and IMF protests in Washington DC this fall, and the G8 meeting in Ottawa next year. Well, we have a different idea. Isn't it time we try to find ways to address the many criticisms leveled against the "movement" (being too white, too middle class, and too male)?

Developing a revolutionary strategy will be crucial for any significant revolutionary movement. In fact, it is probably this, and the practice developed around it that will determine the usefulness of this movement and whether it will stagnate or grow.

In our opinion, such a strategy can only come from a materialist analysis of the system we live under, and of our experiences confronting it. Such a strategy must be developed collectively. We would argue that we have in front of us an integrated system of oppression that is built around several pillars (authoritarian principle/Statism, patriarchy/social reification, nationalism/racism, wage slavery/the market economy - working together to exploit, alienate and oppress us and our world). From our understanding, this system is dynamic and not static, that is, it changes when challenged. It has proven to be highly successful at recuperating partial challenges.

While one of the positive aspects of the New Left was to stress that there was more to capitalism than class oppression and that no struggle was a "second front", it also helped, by introducing the single issue approach, to kill the idea of total struggle (and that of a "revolutionary subject"). It seems now that no one has a total understanding (or general coherent theory) of the system we are up against. The theory of our movement resembles more or less a "grocery list" (and so does our practice).

If we begin to think critically at our situation (a first step towards building a revolutionary strategy) we must ask ourselves a few questions. One is: "Who's benefiting from the crime?" or, like the police often ask before smashing our heads in at demos, "Who's in charge?" Maybe if we knew who is benefiting from this system we are up against and who is running it, it would be easier to develop a strategy for revolution?

We think any honest look at the situation will point toward a rather small group of people, those that we, old-fashioned anarchist-communists, call the ruling class (the bosses and politicians) and their lackeys (technocrats and high ranking corporate officials).

Now, how can we challenge (and eventually overthrow) their power? Well, maybe a good first step would be to try to see how we can break their hegemony and how we can manage to convince the people they exploit and oppress to rebel against them.

Never heard of the 5-letter word? You know this little word called *class*? For people who want to change the world, this word is important (even if it's not politically correct and seemingly outdated to talk about it). Any strategy that wants to overthrow capitalism and build a libertarian communist alternative that doesn't start with a *class analysis*, is a doomed strategy.

Who has the power to change the system? Who has the power to take over the economy, destroy capitalism and build a self-managed, directly democratic community in its place? Who if not the *working class* (in it's broadest sense, that is, all the 'have nots' and 'order takers' of this world)?

People are right when they point to a dual power strategy. In a class society, and the US and Canada are class societies, developing a strategy around the dual power idea would mean building a *class force*, the proletarian camp, to oppose the existing power (the *ruling class*).

Well, ok now, we know quite well that the contemporary proletariat is demoralized, disorganized and sometimes even reactionary. In fact, it doesn't even know it exists! We have many proles (that is people who are bossed around and only have their labor power to sell to survive and know it) but no proletariat (in the sense that there is still no sense of a class, that is, there is objectively a class rather than subjectively). The only way to go where we want to go, unless we are kidding ourselves, is to build that class force. The question is: How do we do it?

Any revolutionary movement will have to confront the whole system head on to topple it (once and for all!) if it doesn't want to fall under it and be suffocated. I think, because of the central role patriarchy plays in society (the "free" reproduction of the work force, the introduction of reification and authority in the social sphere, the negation of the individual, etc.) it's essential to confront it head on. It's the same for the rest of the pillars. Every division, every oppression, since it can be the basis for returning to a class system, must be challenged and eventually destroyed.

The purpose of a revolutionary organization is to make links between all the "single issues" and show what, in all the different specialized forms of revolt, can be generalized so

that all the "single issues" federate into one big general social fight. We must ensure that everyone understands that an injury to one is an injury to all. In this context, clinic defense, for example, is not defensive but offensive. It is part of a general fight to assert our autonomy and to reclaim what's ours (everything!). It's not only a feminist (or a women) issue; it's also a class issue and an anti-racist issue.

But, how do we build that *class force*? One way to start this is to identify where the different oppressions meet. Which issues offer the best generalization opportunity? We must identify the interconnection and work on these.

The global war on the poor, also known as neo-liberalism and corporate globalization, can be a good start. From the dictates of the World Bank and IMF, to the cuts in national social programs, to the outsourcing of production and union busting, to the building of prisons, the introduction of a global management of poverty, etc., the links are clear. We are in front of a class war waged against every one of us. We can take any single issue and link it to a global question (that is: who has the fucking power in this society!). This war affects every community and every form of oppression. As it poses the question of the unequal distribution of wealth and power, it offers a pretty wide opportunity at radicalization.

But where do we start? Whether in sex or in politics, we are against the missionary position (it's boring, cliché and old!). To begin with, we must know who we are, where we live, study and work and START THERE. We should organize around day-to-day issues that pose the question of power and offers an opportunity for radicalization. We are talking about class/community organizing based on a strategy of conflict. It's all around us: Welfare reform, reproductive freedom, prison industrial complex, sweatshops, social housing, working poor, etc.

We don't think a revolutionary organization is the means for organizing those struggles. We need mass based, radical, but open for all, organizations for this. However, we also need an organization where revolutionaries can share experiences and organize for the battle of ideas.

For us, the strategy for a revolutionary organization (that is, an organization of revolutionaries) is to radicalize struggles and lead the battle of ideas against authoritarian ideologies. It must be a rallying point for like-minded activists so that they don't have to run away from authoritarian activist trends, but can confront them head on and win the argument for the autonomy of the social movements. In NEFAC, we think that this work can be roughly divided into three different areas: study and theoretical development; anarchist agitation and propaganda; and intervention in the class struggle. Our aim is to make anarchist ideas popular and as widely used as possible.



## Green Anarchy Calling

To *The Northeastern Anarchist*:

NE offers news and militancy from an anarcho-communist perspective, which suggests that communism is its core orientation. It is certainly on the left. I hope that it is open to those who question identifying the anarchy movement as leftist. Nearly all of issue #1 deals with tactics. I salute the militant stance, especially Chuck0, as an over-thirty who definitely advocates property destruction.

In terms of NE's basic philosophy; however, it appears that anarcho-communism means self-management of industrial society, which is the reigning world, based on divisions of labor, domestication, civilization, mass production, and ever-encroaching technology.

But aren't these institutions at least as responsible as capitalism itself for the crisis at hand? For the destruction of nature, the impoverishing of the social sphere, and growing personal desolation?

It seems to a growing number of anti-authoritarians that the crisis is becoming so total because it issues from a very fundamental level. Liberation cannot be achieved if the problem is only seen as who is to manage this death march we're on. NE's statement of principles rejects "divisions of labor" but in the same sentence upholds "industries." Division of labor is the most elemental, essential aspect of industry. It is the dynamic of industrial, technified society. There is a choice to be made here.

Green anarchy and the primitivist outlook break with the left because it has failed vis-a-vis nature and vis-a-vis the individual. This failure has so much to do with its embrace of industry and the coercion, toxicity, drudgery, and domination of nature required by industry. No tendency has all the answers, but with open discussion we can move forward - conceivably together.

John Zerzan  
868 W. 4th  
Eugene, OR 97402

## Northeastern Anarchist Responds

Dear John,

Thank you for your letter and praise of *Northeastern Anarchist's* coverage of militant protest and tactics. It is interesting that you attempt to differentiate the anarchist movement and philosophy from its traditional place on the political left. While there have always been anarchists who refuse to place themselves within the confines of the political

spectrum, they have traditionally been sympathetic to leftist ideas as being distinctly different from rightist ideas of extreme social control, religious dogma, racial/ethnic/sexual/gender hierarchies, capitalism, and a general return to a time long gone (which may never have existed to begin with). If green anarchy and primitivism break from the left, where do they stand in relation to the right and all of the concepts and ideas associated with it? In a time when the right has co-opted libertarian concepts and slogans, it may be dangerous for people who truly strive for freedom to disassociate from their traditional political base.

Your critique of anarcho-communism appears to be based on confusing concepts with institutions. Division of labor, domestication, civilization, mass production, and even technology (or at least the way we use and abuse it) are all ideas rather than actual institutions. That is, institutional structures by which society is organized. Corporations, religions, the state, and families would be institutions. Division of labor, civilization, etc., are not. Therefore, it is perfectly logical to blame the destruction of nature on these concepts; however, it may also be that other concepts (such as capitalism) are as much to blame for the failures of modern society as those which you point out. If these concepts were better defined, it may be possible that the anarchist-communist philosophy may address some of your concerns.

Fortunately, the issue of division of labor can be addressed as you have given it some description. I would begin by saying that the primitivist and anarcho-communist perspectives have different approaches to defining division of labor. It appears that from the primitivist perspective, any differentiation in the labor individuals perform automatically assumes a power imbalance between them due to dependency. Implicit in this definition is that we must all perform equal labor in order to maintain equality. It also assumes that interdependence is equivalent to inequality, that if we are to depend on others, we lose our autonomy and create hierarchies. How we are to achieve this equality of labor is not covered or implied in your letter, so it shall not be addressed here.

The anarchist communist definition of division of labor takes into account differences in skills among individuals, but critiques the notion that some skills or roles are so valuable that the person who performs them is placed in a position of authority. We question the hierarchical structure of modern production of socially necessary products. We do not see a need for "expert" managers to be in control of the production process or society as a whole. We believe that everyone is capable

of these tasks regardless of their role in society. However, we also believe that people should be free to develop their skills to their fullest and engage in activities which they personally find fulfilling. Therefore, we believe that a society should have a variety of roles for individuals to play out in relation to one another, especially in terms of the production of socially necessary products. This means that we should structure our society based on mutual aid and interdependence. If we rely on others to provide us with food, clothing, etc., we do not assume that others will assert control over our lives. We believe that a society structured on anarchist principles which rejects hierarchy will have people who genuinely want to work for each other's benefit.

We also believe that expertise will manifest itself in temporary situations of necessity. For example, a person who has medical expertise may hold power over the lives of others because she/he can literally save them from death. This imbues the expert with power and authority, yet even in today's society oriented around the personal pursuit of power this person does not use this power to control the lives of others (at least not in the same sense as the state or the management of a corporation). It is fairly safe to assume that in an anarchist society, both the means for control (centralization) and the desire to do so would be eliminated, thus rendering division of labor a neutral function of the organization of a complex society consisting of millions (if not billions of individuals). Division of labor does not breed hierarchy if we conceptualize it as socially necessary and egalitarian. Expertise does not create hierarchy if it is temporary and situational.

You are right to say that the crisis of modern societies is "becoming so total because it issues from a very fundamental level." That fundamental level is clearly ideological and that ideology is capitalism and the ideas of competition, individualism, and greed which it engenders in people. If we are to eliminate the influence of this ideological construct on our society, then we can free society from all its negative impacts because it is not those exploited by capitalism who are the cause of the problem, it is those who control capital and their allies. We cannot return to a Garden of Eden which may have never existed, but we can create a world organized for the benefit of all at the expense of none.

I hope that future critiques will include more detail than allusions to basic concepts, so that we can be free to truly discuss our philosophical positions and come to mutual understanding. For a world without leaders,

Stanislav Vysotsky  
Sabate Anarchist Collective (NEFAC-Boston)



## Anarcho-Communism in Chile

Dear Comrades,

Here are some copies of our paper *Hombre y Sociedad*. Hope someone from your organization reads Spanish. If not, you can tell us which articles you are interested in, and we can do our best to sum them up in English for you.

Unfortunately, we are not able to speak French for the people in Quebec. A couple of days ago we met a Canadian girl, who wasn't an anarchist, but a leftist. Anyways, she was very fond of anarchists. We asked her about Groupe Anarchiste Emile-Henry in Quebec, of which she regarded very nicely. Not only was she familiar with the collective, but she also spoke very highly of the work they do.

We also greatly appreciate your sending us a copy of your magazine, the *Northeastern Anarchist*. It is really good.

Here in Chile, we've been going through a period of heightening repression. The recent demonstrations against the meetings of the Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo (BID) in our country were brutally repressed, with more than 300 persons sent to jail and the use of torture in some cases. The repression is similar to the one of the times of Pinochet's dictatorship. Not even a single protest is tolerated. They are all repressed in the act. Today we had barricades and a demonstration for the 'Day of the Young Fighter' (in honor of Vergarza Toledo bothers, both killed together by the secret police in 1985).

It's been a time of agitation for all of South America, which looks like a pregnant women that's in pain and ready to give birth to a new world. We are in a time of convergence of the popular and revolutionary forces of the working class, and anarchists are playing their part in it.

Well, that's it for now. Hope this contact will remain in the future for the revolution's sake. We consider it to be of paramount importance the development of serious revolutionary anarchist organization in the USA, the mouth of the lion, as you know the position of our countries in the new world order. So the solidarity and struggle of the exploited of all our continent is needed.

Salud y Comunismo Anarquista,

Jose Antonio Gutierrez Danton  
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## Militancy and Movement Building

We just received your magazine, the *Northeastern Anarchist*, and so far I've read *Short History of Anarchist Organization*, some of the *Timoney 3*, *Anarchy in Mobtown*,

*NYC's Anarchist Resurgence* and *Radicalize This* -- theory, practice, and struggle updates, trying my best to avoid the street-fighting type news, news of mostly young white kids with masks. (This is my criticism of the movement in general, not just *The Northeastern Anarchist*).

My question is, how do we build a MASS movement in ski masks and street-fighting? I would like to see and hear about the awesome community-work, labor organizing, land-struggles, etc. that gets buried under so much of the black bloc type stuff. Here in the US, Britain, and Canada it's a new romance of warrior-anarchy that only attracts a very small amount of even the growing masses of disenfranchised and pissed-off people. The process of re-enchantment (in radical, cooperative, anti-capitalist, social, not individualistic ways) is what anarchists need to be part of.

If the anarchist movement was successful at that, we would see the numbers. Anarchy needs to get out from underneath the black and red if we want to be more than just young white kids. It's up to us anarchists to broaden our scope, redefine our images, rewrite our literature, and redesign our aesthetics of our publications. But that's only a tiny part of it; as well we must re-evaluate our 'actions', strategies, tactics, and most importantly our organizing 'campaigns'. We must make coalitions with people and groups working on housing, health-care, labor, ecology, and the many other aspects of 'activism' that anarchist ignore. If we want anarchism to be a movement of mass society, we need a re-prioritization. Solidarity,

Rob Augman

c/o Onward Collective

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## Greetings From The Inside

Dear *Northeastern Anarchist*,

How you doing? I want to thank you for sending me the first issue of your magazine. I also wanted to say thanks for running the address update on me, now that I'm here in Walpole. I thought you did a good job in putting out the magazine. Too often our left and revolutionary publications are hooked up kind of sloppily. The content might be solid, but the form is weak. Not to make a fetish out of professionalism, but having a well laid out and editorially tight publication is important. People take the ideas more seriously when the spelling and grammar is correct. So I was glad to see your magazine done well in all these regards.

I also found the articles and much of the discussion interesting. I'm not an anarchist, but I've had good relations and worked jointly with many anarchist collectives and people over the years. I certainly see us all as at least

allies and often more. For some years now I've been working with the Anarchist Black Cross Federation, and I have a lot of respect for their practice and spirit.

The articles on strategy and analysis were solid. Talking and thinking about working together and issues like property destruction need more time I'd say. On a general level it is important to understand that we cannot allow the enemy (the State) to determine the legitimacy of any of our tactics or strategy. If we allow them to set what's acceptable resistance and what isn't, we will never be successful. Within the struggle itself, while we can and should find ways to work with, and complement the activities of people who are on principle pacifists and non-violent (even here there is the question of violence towards property only, some might support this), that perspective shouldn't be the only or principle one. The use of force isn't any different than other questions, I mean it's not that some people "like" it and others don't. We should view it as what will advance the struggle, the understanding of the people, the contradictions involved, etc. Well anyway, I was glad to see some of these ideas talked about.

Well keep up the positive work. Much success to you (all) in Quebec -- I will certainly be there with you in spirit.

Jaan Laaman #W41514

Box 100, South Walpole, MA 02071

## For A Decentralized, Federated, Anti-Authoritarian Movement

Thanks for getting the first issue of the *Northeastern Anarchist* to me. I not only enjoyed reading it, but also liked that, in choosing to feature demonstrations and actions from around the world, it really showed how global this movement is. Congratulations on a good first issue!

I've been watching and appreciating the NEFAC work from afar, and it has inspired my next column in *Arsenal*, which should appear in a month or so. Keep up the great work! Having luckily made it into Quebec City recently, I was amazed at the growing political radicalization of the movement - the 5,000+ person anticapitalist bloc was fantastic! - and more convinced than ever that more anarchist federations of all tendencies and perspectives are needed to build a decentralized, yet federated, anti-authoritarian movement. Thanks for leading the way. Best,

Cindy Milstein

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# Breaking the Barricades:

## Quebec's Carnival of Resistance Against Capitalism

*Neither J18 nor the WTO protest in Seattle, or its counterpart, A16 in Washington DC, were unique one-off events... similar incidents can be expected to occur in various forms and with varying degrees of intensity, aiming at the same target (corporate power) for the foreseeable future... the activities are global in scope, international in locale, and have involved sites in Canada on several occasions.*

-- Canadian Secret Intelligence Service (CSIS)

**QUEBEC CITY** - From April 20-22, the streets of Quebec City were filled with the spirit of revolt as tens of thousands of people protested the third Summit of the Americas, determined to confront the proposed Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA), and seriously disrupt these plans for absolute capitalist domination of the two continents.

Despite the largest security operation in Canadian history, the best efforts of the Canadian authorities proved to be a complete failure in preventing demonstrations of "Seattle-like" proportions. For three days, defiant protesters destroyed large sections of the security fence perimeter, clashed with riot police, and were responsible for the delay and cancellation of a number of high-level trade meetings. By the Summit's end, there were hundreds of arrests, with injuries to police officers and protesters alike. Damages were estimated in the hundreds of thousands of dollars, and security costs surpassed \$70 million.

Beyond the dramatic images of tear gas and street battles, the Quebec protests mark an important evolution in the anti-globalization movement in terms of tactics, militancy, organization and a radical departure from liberal-reformist politics. Despite the increasing popularity of direct action, decentralization and directly democratic forms of decision-making with in the anti-globalization movement, the

mobilization around the Summit of the Americas is the first time that these methods of organization were used to reinforce explicitly revolutionary anti-capitalist politics on a mass scale. Additionally, the wide support for a 'diversity of tactics' managed to raise the level of confrontation and militancy during these protests, forcing the terms of struggle beyond the narrow confines of passive symbolic action and in the direction of revolutionary resistance.

Indeed, for anarchists these developments point towards exciting possibilities for the movement, and instill great hope for the future of revolutionary struggle here in North America.

### WHAT'S THIS FTAA AGAIN?

At the center of these dramatic protests was the third Summit of the Americas, which brought together the heads of state of the Americas (with the exception of Cuba) and representatives of leading multinational corporations. Their aim? -- To discuss the usual scare-mongering about state security, drugs and terrorism, sprinkled with empty rhetoric about democracy and human rights, and most importantly, to put the final touches on the Free Trade Area of the Americas agreement.

The FTAA is the formal name given to the massive expansion of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). The FTAA's goal is to impose NAFTA's failed model of increased privatization and deregulation throughout the hemisphere, submitting health care, education, as well as environmental and labor standards to the dictatorship of the capitalist "free-market". With a population of 800 million, and a combined gross domestic product (GDP) of \$11 trillion, the FTAA would be the largest free-trade zone in the world.

The Quebec Summit was to be a significant step forward for the implementation of the FTAA, which is planned to go into effect no later

than 2005. Unfortunately for the capitalists and ruling elites, negotiations did not go as smoothly as anticipated when over 60,000 uninvited guests gathered in Quebec to crash the party.

### SECURITY OPERATIONS AND PRE-EMPTIVE ARRESTS

*The truly violent are those who prepare for the summit by accumulating tear gas, plastic bullets and pepper spray. Those who enact laws and measures that will put hundreds of thousands of poor in the street, those who let pharmaceutical corporations make billions on sickness, causing the death of millions of people, those who are copyrighting life and creating dependence and hunger. In a word, those who put their profits before our lives. These are the ones we should fear, not the anarchists.*

-- Anarchists: You Only See Them When You Fear Them

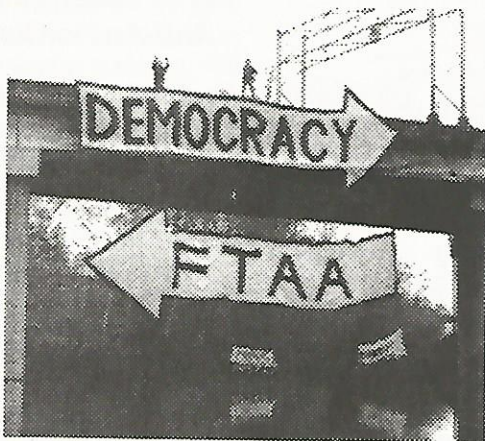
*If you want peace, you must prepare for war.*

-- Serge Menard, Quebec's Minister for Public Security

In the months leading up to the Summit, the Canadian authorities, ever fearful of "another Seattle" transpiring in the streets, enacted a number of draconian measures to ensure the security of the delegates and intimidate any would-be protesters. This security operation was the largest and most expensive in Canadian history.

Millions were spent constructing a 10-foot high concrete wall topped with heavily reinforced chain-link fence, which spanned over 2.5 square miles around the Vieux-Quebec and the Haute-Ville, areas where the Summit was to take place. In addition to this "Wall of Shame," authorities rented all vacant residences within the perimeter and reserved all hotel accommodations in the city to keep the protestors out. Well, that is not entirely accurate: hundreds of male and female inmates were transferred from a nearby Quebec City jail to other facilities in order to make room for protesters expected to be arrested during the summit. The transfer of prisoners alone cost Canadian taxpayers \$5 million.

Over 6,000 police from the RCMP, provi-





sional Surete du Quebec, and local municipal forces were trained in crowd control and armed with the latest in anti-riot weaponry: armored mobile water cannons; thick body armor and heavy shields; 'Arwin 37' laser-targeting rifles for shooting "non-lethal" plastic bullets; C-7 assault rifles; .308-caliber sniper rifles; CS tear gas, pepper spray and assorted chemical irritants; concussion grenades and stun guns; attack dogs; and Griffon military helicopters used for aerial surveillance. Also, in preparation for a 'state of emergency' situation, 1,500 troops were stationed at the Citadelle, and an additional 3,000 were stationed outside of the city.

Beyond the massive policing operations in Quebec, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS), and other international security forces united their intelligence gathering operations to identify potential "violent groups" and "their leaders" long before the summit began. Customs and immigration officials were provided with information about activists who were arrested at mass actions in other parts of the world and believed to be headed for Quebec City.

In Montreal, the 'Germinal' affinity group was infiltrated months in advance by two members of a special squad of RCMP and SQ officers. As a result, members of the group were arrested en route to Quebec City carrying equipment such as smoke bombs, gas masks, shields, and some radical literature. It has recently come to light that the police agents who managed to infiltrate the group incited members to arm themselves with more serious equipment, including military-grade smoke devices and flash grenade simulators. Currently five members of the group face serious charges and if convicted, they face a possible ten-year sentence.

## MOBILIZING AGAINST THE SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS

*It didn't start in Seattle, and it sure as hell won't end in Quebec...*

-- Convergence of Anti-Capitalist Struggles (CLAC)

One of the most exciting aspects of the Quebec protests was the amount of organizing that was done by consciously anarchist and other anti-capitalist militants. Most of this activity was mobilized by the Montreal-based 'Convergence of Anti-Capitalist Struggles' (CLAC) and the Quebec City-based 'Summit of the Americas Welcoming Committee' (CASA), and reinforced by the work of radical anti-authoritarian groups such as the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty (OCAP), Anti-Racist Action (ARA), NYC Ya Basta!, and the Northeastern Federation of Anarcho-Communists (NEFAC).

Both CLAC and CASA formed in response

to the planned Summit of the Americas meeting, and also as a means to reinforce existing local networks of resistance. Each group organized around principles of unity that were anti-capitalist, feminist, non-reformist, anti-authoritarian and supporting a diversity of tactics. Although mobilizing against the Summit of the Americas was an important focal point for both CLAC and CASA, they have a healthy criticism of "summit-hopping" (the phenomena of backpacking activists travelling from one big protest to the next... often crisscrossing the globe to do so). These mobilizing efforts were seen as just one contribution within a framework of long-term struggle occurring in both the North and South against capitalist globalization.

Outside of the organizing done by anarchists and radical anti-capitalists, a number of NGOs and unions came together within the OCP-2001 coalition, and also around the Réseau Quebecois sur l'integration Continentale (RQIC), which organized the 'People's Summit' (a "civil society" conference that ran parallel to the actual Summit of the Americas). Other groups included Operation SalAMI (who actually spent more energy trying to marginalize CLAC and CASA than doing any real organizing work on the ground), and student mobilizations from the University of Quebec at Montreal (UQAM), McGill and Concordia.

## A20 DAY OF ACTION

*This type of behavior that we have witnessed here this afternoon was carried out by a small group of extremists is contrary to all democratic principles that are so dear to us.*

-- Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien

In the days leading up to the Summit of the Americas, hundreds of activists participated in the spokescouncils organized by CLAC and CASA. Each spokescouncil was directly democratic and multi-lingual, with an emphasis on equal gender and racial representation. Hours were spent discussing the strategy and logistics of the protests, with most speakers representing larger affinity groups planning for direct action.

Since most delegates were already inside of the security perimeter, the possibility of shutting down the summit through a successful blockade (ala Seattle) was out of the question. An alternative strategy was set into motion where disruptive actions would be utilized around the security perimeter and throughout the city, thereby making the consequences of the summit proceedings as disorderly and unpleasant as possible for all those involved (ala Prague). This strategy was left provocatively vague and open to interpretation by the

various tactically diverse groupings.

On April 20, over 10,000 people gathered at Université Laval for the planned 'Carnival Against Capitalism' through the city. Different zones of resistance activity were planned. The green zone would be a festive march, and later street party, with no risk of arrest. The yellow zone was for those who wanted to go to the wall around Vieux Quebec (the old city), and participate in non-violent civil disobedience. The red zone was designated for those looking to initiate maximum disruption. Also, some of the yellow zone, "hard yellow" affinity groups, planned support the actions of the red zone if a successful breach of the security perimeter was to take place.

The march down Boulevard Rene Levesque and towards the security perimeter was tense with anticipation, and not without incident. Along the route, a small group of masked protesters broke away from the march and set to work on a Saint-Foy police cruiser, slashing its tires and spraypainting the hood. As the occupant of the car attempted to make an arrest, a crude yet effective unarrest took place someone allegedly hit the cop in the face and the group managed to escape. At this point the cop pulled out his gun, and tried to pursue the masked protesters. Thankfully the situation was de-escalated by a resident who persuaded the cop to put away his gun and leave the scene.

A few blocks from the security perimeter, an announcement went over the sound system: "Turn to the left to go to the green zone if you would like to participate in a safe, non-confrontational carnival against capitalism. For those of you who wish to continue the fight, the fence is straight ahead!" Thousands continued on towards the fence, touching off the first of the weekend's protracted street battles.

## REVOLUTIONARY ANTI-CAPITALIST OFFENSIVE

*You can't reform capitalism and inhumanity. Just kick it till it breaks.*

-- Angry Brigade, 1971

The core of the red zone was made up of militants aligned with the Revolutionary Anti-Capitalist Offensive (RACO). A statement released weeks in advance by the 'Autonomous Organizing Collective of Anti-Authoritarians from the Midwest, Northeast, Montreal, and Quebec' called on anarchists to mobilize for the Summit of the Americas and prepare for physical confrontation in order to "show the ruling elites of the Americas that we are ready to resist their attacks and fight back".

Hundreds took up the call, amassing one of the most well-equipped and broadly supported (not to mention, the most gender-diverse)



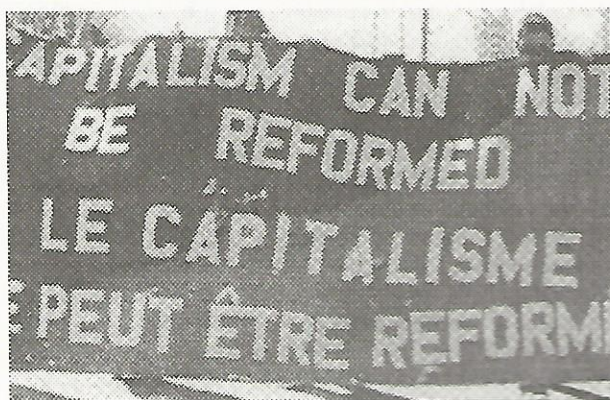
black bloc mobilizations in recent activist history. Unlike much of the yellow zone, which seemed fairly indecisive about strategy and tactics for the weekend, the red zone was very well organized and determined to disrupt the summit by any means necessary. Many people came prepared with padded body armor, helmets, batons and shields (to counter police attacks); gas masks, vinegar-soaked masks and heavy gloves (to defend against tear gas); ropes, grappling hooks and bolt-cutters (to tear down sections of the security fence); and slingshots, hockey pucks, rocks, paint bombs and Molotov cocktails (to take offensive actions when necessary).

After breaking off from the green zone, the red and yellow groups continued on towards the security perimeter, led by banners which read: "Revolutionary Anti-Capitalist Offensive" and "Capitalism Cannot Be Reformed". Along the route, a handful of anarchists bombarded a Shell gas station with stones and hockey pucks, breaking almost every window. Spray-painted on the exterior was "Vive Saro-Wiwa" in reference to social activist Ken Saro-Wiwa who was hung in Nigeria for organizing against Shell's activities in that country. In what was to set the tone for the entire weekend, this action was embraced with approving cheers of "Vive le Black Bloc!" As the march continued on, another group broke off from the march and, in a widely televised attack, smashed up two media vans from the Global News Corporation.

Upon reaching the security perimeter, red zone affinity groups gathered behind long sheets of plastic to protect against pepper spray, and approached the fence, with those who brought shields and gas masks in the front. The authorities had claimed that the steel fence would stop a car driving 100-miles an hour, but in a few minute's time, ropes and grappling hooks were attached to the top of the fence and a section as wide as the entire boulevard was brought crashing down.

Before riot police could mobilize to push back the surging crowd, they were forced on the defensive by a relentless barrage of hockey pucks, cobblestones, paint bombs and the odd Molotov cocktail thrown their way. Sections of fence and police barriers were also used as battering rams, touching off hand-to-hand combat between riot police and groups of black bloc anarchists. Behind the front lines of street fighting, the Deconstructionist Institute for Surreal Topology, dressed in medieval attire, pulled up a home-made catapult and launched stuffed animals at the lines of police. Eventually, as reinforcements arrived on the scene, the police managed to gain the upper hand and the first volleys of tear gas were sent into the crowds.

As tear gas canisters rained down on demonstrators, there was a brief period of panic and retreat. Unfortunately for the police, much of the 'red zone' came prepared for such



actions, and returned tear gas canisters back in their direction as rapidly as they were being launched at the crowds of protesters. After about an hour of pitched battle, columns of riot police pushed forward and protesters began to retreat, attacking several corporate media vehicles and a police car along the way.

At about this time two armored water cannons made their entrance from the rear, attempting to corral the retreating protesters. Rather than fleeing down small side streets to avoid being boxed in, protesters charged the water cannons, climbed on them, slashed the hoses, smashed windows and jammed the cannons with hockey sticks. Both water cannons beat a clumsy retreat, hitting a few parked cars before leaving the area. From that point on, the water cannons were safely escorted by riot police behind the perimeter.

It was during these first two hours of battle on Rene Levesque that undercover police kidnapped Jaggi Singh, one of the most visible and effective spokepeople from CLAC. A group of undercovers (most likely CSIS) assaulted Jaggi in the 'green zone' area of St. Jean-Baptiste, and forced him into an awaiting van. One young woman who tried to stop the attack was shoved to the ground. When other would-be rescuers intervened, the assailants drew truncheons from under their coats, announced they were police agents. Jaggi was eventually charged with "inciting riot" and "possession of a deadly weapon" (the theatrical catapult used to launch teddy bears), and after 17 days in jail was released on \$3,000 bail.

Towards late afternoon, police managed to push the crowds of demonstrators into the St-Jean Baptiste neighborhood with a liberal use of tear gas and rubber bullets, indiscriminately attacking participants from one of the peaceful 'green zone' street festival in the process. This touched off further clashes as residents joined protester militants and fought with police late into the night. It was reported that two banks were firebombed before police finally regained control of the streets at about 2:30am.

The day's actions were responsible for delaying the opening ceremonies of the summit for over an hour, and forcing the cancellation of

high-level trade meetings between the United States and various Caribbean and Latin American nations. According to the mainstream media: "Inside the convention center and the neighboring hotels, officials and dignitaries were under siege, unable to move from one building to another. The buildings were locked up so tightly that police shut down the ventilation system to prevent the air from being contaminated and wouldn't even let reporters who had left the building return for fear they had been exposed to pepper spray or tear gas."

## STOLEN SECURITY PLANS AND SUMMIT CYBER-ATTACKS

At some point during the day a group of protestors managed to break into a police van and appropriate a number of shields, vests, and a police radio. Also taken were several highly sensitive documents, including police intelligence reports, security plans for the summit, an itinerary of meeting times and locations, and various strategies for crowd control during the weekend. These liberated texts were made public through an anonymous posting to the Independent Media Center. The following day FBI agents visited the main offices of the Independent Media Center, located in Seattle, where they seized computer-log records and issued a gag-order against the alternative media group.

According to the mainstream media, one federal criminal justice source said the speed with which the stolen documents appeared on the Internet speaks to the sophistication of the anti-globalization movement. "The fact that you have something of this magnitude out there on the Web, it really shows these groups are strong, resourceful and resilient." The breach of security came as a great embarrassment for the Canadian government, which had recently lost a highly sensitive, anti-terrorism document when it was stolen from a government official's car while he was at a hockey game.

In addition to these stolen documents, other forms of sophisticated attacks plagued the Summit of the Americas: twenty-eight government and corporate websites came under cyber-siege by computer hackers. A group calling itself 'The Electrohippies' explained that these specific websites were targeted because "they are involved with the operation of the FTAA conference, they are corporate sponsors of the FTAA conference, or they are involved in the extremely excessive security measures being arranged to restrict the ability of the public to access the conference."



Corporate targets included Cisco System, Alcan, Telus, and Bombardier, as well Sun Microsystems, Barrick Gold Corporation, CIBC and KPMG. Also targeted were the sites for the FTAA and the Inter-American Development Bank.

## RESISTANCE SPREADS LIKE WILDFIRE

*We expected this. You can't have a trade summit these days without teargas; it would be like having a cheeseburger without cheese.*  
-- senior U.S. trade official

Saturday was the official protest day for the more mainstream organizations, principally the Canadian unions. A legal march of nearly 40,000 unionists, progressive organizations, and assorted activists made it's way through the lower part of the city, far away from the FTAA meetings and security perimeter, and ended in an empty lot. There a short, and by most accounts uninspiring, rally took place and then most people were escorted to awaiting busses and transported back to their respective cities. One Canadian Auto Worker unionist was quoted as saying: "Why was the 'legal protest' conducted miles away from the security perimeter? Had I known I was marching towards a parking lot, I would have stayed home and done that at the fucking mall."

Of course, not everyone followed the march to it's final (non)destination. About halfway through the march, a defacto coalition of wobblers, Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), Canadian Auto Workers (CAW), black bloc anarchists, and radical cheerleaders broke off and headed towards Rene-Levesque (where street battles between small groups of protesters and police took place all morning). Along the way, a couple of bank windows got smashed in, and at one point several anarchists ran down a side street and returned rolling a dumpster full of long wooden sticks and projectiles. In a scene reminiscent of troops going off to fight a popular war, battle-ready militants marched up the hill and through the St-Jean Baptiste neighborhood while hundreds of people lined the streets and hung out of windows to greet them with loud cheers of support.

Down a small side street people went to work on the fence with bolt cutters and grappling hooks. In response, a bulldozer drove up to the fence, presumably in an effort to prevent the black bloc from rocking it back and forth and toppling it in the same fashion as Friday afternoon. However, before the bulldozer could press up against the fence, a wide hole was cut through the chain link and people smashed in the windshield with cobblestones and chased the driver from the machine (allowing him to escape with-

out any physical confrontation). A handful of people surged through the opening and attacked a group of police stationed nearby, who were forced to retreat under falling cobblestones and slingshot fire. The short-lived advancement lasted about a hundred feet into the security zone, at which point groups of riot police countercharged with tear gas and plastic bullets. Eventually demonstrators fell back onto Rue St. Jean, but not before blocking their path of retreat with a burning dumpster to hold back police charges.

Next the fence was torn down with ropes and bolt cutters nearby at St. Matthew's Cemetery, others used crowbars to dislodge cobblestones from the sidewalk, and an attempt was made bring down the reinforced check-point at the end of Rue St. Jean. By this time, however, police were alerted to the black bloc presence in the St. Jean-Baptiste neighborhood, and a strong show of force was used to clear the area of protesters. With helicopters overhead and the entire neighborhood now engulfed in tear gas, many people made their way up the hill to Rene-Levesque.

Most of the morning's actions had taken place on Rene-Levesque, where small groups of battle-weary protestors managed to resist police advancements to a temporary stale-

mate after sustaining hours of tear gas, concussion grenades and water cannons. In an effort to draw fire away from the front-lines on Rene-Levesque, the black bloc attempted to open up a new battle front against the security perimeter a few blocks to the east of the boulevard. Along a small side street off of Rene-Levesque, about 50-60 well-equipped militants were surprised to find the unguarded headquarters of the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce (CIBC) directly in their path. Within minutes, every ground-level

window was smashed to shards by a frenzy of projectiles, and a Molotov cocktail was lobbed through the damaged exterior (it was quickly extinguished by a group of pacifists).

Instead of the usual cheers that accompanied black bloc actions during most of the weekend, the assault on the CIBC managed to prompt a very negative response from onlookers. This was to be the first direct meeting between black bloc anarchists and ultra-dogmatic pacifists affil-

iated with Operation SalAMI. Needless to say, with members of SalAMI training for months in "de-escalation" tactics aimed at "neutralizing potential vandals" during the Summit of the Americas, the situation degenerated very rapidly into a series of minor altercations. Supposedly "non-violent" activists tried to physically attack the black bloc. People were shoved around, punches were thrown, and in one instance, an individual was maced after trying to defend himself. Rather than stoop to the low depths of SalAMI, and allow for tactical differences between activists erupt into physical confrontation, the black bloc had the humility to leave the area and de-escalate further conflict.

The major street battle of the day, indeed one of the major street battles of the weekend, began in the late afternoon when the black bloc regrouped in the St. Jean-Baptiste neighborhood and re-attacked the security checkpoint on Rue St. Jean. People with gas masks and shields were in the front, and dozens of people followed in organized lines marching forward. After a concerted effort to bring down sections of the checkpoint, police attacked and forced a brief retreat. As groups of riot police mobilized to push protesters out of the neighborhood and into the lower city, the black bloc

held their ground and took an impressive offensive against the police lines. Behind shields and makeshift barricades, militants slowly advanced two blocks up a narrow street. This time, when people were attacked with tear gas and plastic bullets, they fought back with cobblestones, slingshots and nearly a dozen Molotov cocktails, forcing the lines of police in a brief retreat, and drawing loud cheers from the crowds in the street.

Street battles continued onto a highway onramp off of Cote d'Abraham, which had been occupied by protesters since early in

the day and was now under a brutal assault from riot police. Despite hours of tear gas, water cannons and plastic bullets, thousands of people continued to rhythmically beat on the guard rails in a defiant drum session that could be heard from blocks away. Now as the police tried to dislodge them once and for all, the black bloc and dozens of Quebec youths came to their defense. Barricades went up, and the police were hit with a barrage of rocks,



**Anarchists make short work of  
an advancing bulldozer**



bottles, paint bombs, fireworks and Molotov cocktails for over three hours. When individual riot police would step out of the police lines to take aim and fire rubber bullets into the crowds, they were immediately attacked with slingshots and cobblestones and forced to retreat. When excessive tear gas was used, anarchists with gas masks would use the billowing clouds for cover and launch a number of Molotov cocktails in the direction of police.

By nightfall police managed to push people off the highway and into the lower city, however every advancement forward was stubbornly met by continuous street fighting. In a renewed series of pitched battles, local residents from the neighborhoods of St. Jean-Baptiste and Limoilou continued the fighting where black bloc militants left off. By nightfall, the major confrontations with the police were no longer confined to handful of "hot areas" around the security perimeter, but had spread all over the city. Rioting broke out on a few commercial streets in the lower part of the city, banks and multinationals had their windows smashed in, and large bonfires were set in a number of street intersections (over 60 individual fires were reported throughout the city during the night). Police did not regain control over the streets until well after 4am.

## THE AFTERMATH

*If the truest measure of a democracy is how it handles dissent, this weekend's police actions are revealing.*

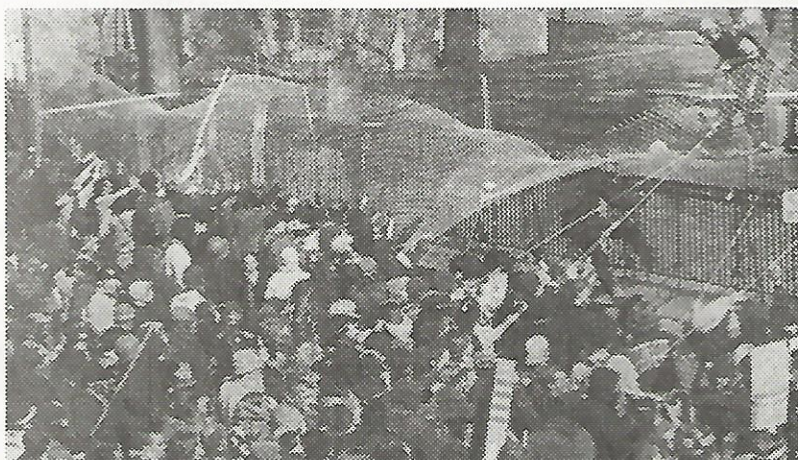
-- M. J. Milloy, reporter for the 'Montreal Hour'

For three days, the streets of Quebec City were charged with mass dissent, and shadowed by repression and police violence. Although protesters were responsible for delays and the cancellation of a few trade meetings during the weekend, the Summit of the Americas ended on schedule, with delegates declaring a final victory with an accord to adopt the FTAA by 2005 (in reality, no real gains were made in reaching an agreement on an FTAA text). From behind a 2.5 mile security fence surrounded by thousands of heavily-armed riot police, Jean Chretien, apparently oblivious to irony, proclaimed: "The declaration we have just signed contains a clear, unequivocal commitment to democracy, making it an essential condition for participation in the Summit of the Americas process."

On the streets, many visiting protesters fled Quebec in order to avoid further police reprisals, while those who remained immediately set to work organizing legal support and documenting

instances of police brutality. In the end, a total of 463 people were arrested during the protests. Police were said to have used 4,709 canisters of tear gas and 822 plastic bullets. Injuries were numerous. Over 200 protesters (and 71 cops) were reportedly injured. Medics treated burns, broken bones, concussions, tear-gas inhalation, and plastic bullet wounds (one protestor was in critical condition, and is expected to never speak again, after being shot in the throat with a plastic bullet).

Despite politicians declaring victory, and radical activists now forced to deal with the aftermath of these protests, the accomplishments made in the streets of Quebec should not be underestimated. Beyond simply inconveniencing summit delegates, thousands of courageous people came together in a powerful statement against global capitalism, battling against the forces of repression in an effort to defiantly assert their vision for a better world. After Quebec, it is apparent that the growing wave of anti-capitalist resistance movements in North America doesn't appear to be subsiding anytime soon.



*Hundreds bring down the security perimeter on Rue St. Jean*

## BEYOND FAIR TRADE: AGAINST CAPITALISM AND THE STATE!

Obviously disruptive actions, property destruction and street fighting are limited forms of strategy for anarchists (not to mention magnets for unchecked machismo!), and we need to look beyond them if we are to develop a serious revolutionary movement. With much of the post-Seattle debate around globalization dominated by self-appointed representatives of "civil society," there is a very real danger of anarchist organizational methods and street tactics being recuperated and used to further an agenda of reformist electoral politics, national protectionism, and liberal 'fair trade' campaigns. For this reason, it's important that we focus much more attention on

political struggle ("the battle of ideas") and developing long-term strategy than we do on street tactics.

If anarchism is to continue to be an influential force within the anti-globalization movement, we must be clear about our role as anarchists in this movement, and uncompromising in our vision for radical social change.

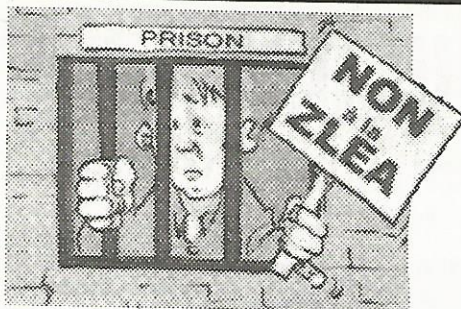
For anarchists, the struggle against globalization is inseparable from the struggle against the economic system that is the basis for it: capitalism. Anarchists oppose the FTAA, and all free trade accords, because they are the direct extension of capitalism. Capitalism is an inherently exploitive, alienating and destructive system that cannot be reformed; it must be abolished.

At the same time, we recognize that nation states are not the victims of globalization, as some suggest, but are one of the main authors and implementers of globalization. In regards to the FTAA, this trade accord is not only a strong arm approach by the bosses and corporations, but also a project that has been prepared in the offices of foreign relations ministries of the thirty-four members of the Organization of American States (OAS). The nation state, is not part of the solution. They are part of the problem. As such, anarchists reject calls for national protectionism and national sovereignty and instead align ourselves with internationalism. Capitalism is globalized; the resistance of the working class must be as well.

We are for radical, class-confrontational, self-managed forms of struggle. We are not against reforms per se (some are indeed good and can go against the logic of the system), but we are against reformism. Rather than "engaging" (lobbying) the system in the name of "civil society," we adopt an uncompromising strategy of revolutionary dual power: that is, a strategy of developing counter-institutions that are antagonistic to both capital and the State, and reinforced by a mass working class culture of resistance.

We fight for an egalitarian society without borders, without classes, without sexism, without racism; a self-managed society where people contribute according to their abilities and receive according to their needs. This stateless society will be free and rooted in solidarity and built on a foundation of direct democracy. Freedom, justice and dignity are possible -- The future will be ours!





# Building a Campaign of Solidarity and General Amnesty

by Nicolas Phebus (Groupe Anarchiste Emile-Henry)

Since the Summit of the Americas, a large movement of solidarity with all the political prisoners arrested around these protests has developed. People from all over the world have taken to the streets in solidarity. Organizations of all types, and individuals from across the US and Canada, have sent money toward the non-sectarian CASA defense fund. This movement didn't appear out of nowhere. The fact that people and organizations are willing to be in solidarity with black bloc militants and peaceful demonstrators alike is clearly a result of the emergence of a new respect for a diversity of tactics.

## Taking the Lead of Solidarity

The aftermath of the Summit could have been like other mass demonstrations. In fact, in the morning of A21, there was an isolated denunciation of "protestor violence" by the mainstream Peoples' Summit representative, Françoise David, and Quebec "non-violence" guru, Philippe Duhamel of Operation SalAMI. However, as the day unfolded, it became difficult to denounce "marginal groups planning for violence" since, as one Montreal medic put it, the black bloc wasn't "the violent minority of protestors," but rather "the minority of the violent protestors". At the end of the day, Philippe Duhamel was alone, with journalists and politicians, to denounce the violence of the protests.

We knew that the mainstream media, and some "respectable activists", would do all they could to swing the sympathies of the public back to "law and order" and "business as usual". That's why, on April 23rd, at its first general assembly after the Summit, the CASA tried to take the lead for solidarity with clear demands and an immediate plan of action. Since we were the first to issue demands -- immediate and unconditional liberation of all the political prisoners and a general amnesty for all protestors -- and a call to action, others had little choice but to follow the lead and the hardcore non-violent dogmatics were caught off guard.

## A Movement of Unconditional Solidarity

The first activist group to answer our call and to align its demands and actions with ours (outside of CLAC, but that was obvious), was OQP-2001. To their credit, during the Summit they had an absolutely irreproachable attitude

and afterward they unanimously decided to support everyone, regardless of politics. The coalition, under pressure in their rank-and-file, simply made our demands theirs, mobilized for our actions and started asking for money on the behalf of our defense fund.

The first wave of demonstrations was launched on the week of MayDay. In Quebec City, over 600 people showed up for a powerful demonstration of solidarity, while in Montreal hundreds joined the union march under anarchist and anti-capitalist banners demanding a general amnesty. Solidarity demonstrations were also held in many other cities. On May 3rd, another demonstration disrupted the annual benefit dinner of the Canadian Liberal Party. During the protest, some 150 protestors clashed with Montreal police.

After that, CLAC and CASA issued a call for three days of actions in solidarity with the remaining political prisoners, starting on May 22nd. In the meantime, the "movement to free Jaggi" gathered momentum in English-speaking Canada and Quebec with almost daily actions and press coverage. He was finally freed on May 7th on a \$3,000 cash bail, and with peculiar conditions such as "not having a megaphone at demonstration" and "not being in a position of leadership in demonstration". After the release of Jaggi Singh, the struggle to make the rest of the political prisoners known intensified. Indeed, there were not many people who knew that there were still eight people behind bars because of the Summit. To highlight these cases, the CLAC and CASA demands for the days of actions were "Free the 'Germinal Five' and All Other Political Prisoners" and "General Amnesty for All Protestors".

It's during these days of actions that the first Summit of the Americas political prisoner, Stéphane Paquet, was sentenced on May 15th to nine months behind bars and a three years probation for smashing a few windows. Another political prisoner, Jean Pierre Bélanger, was also sentenced to six months in jail for "death threats against a police officer". Finally, the case of Vaughn Barnett, a non-violent activist who crossed the fence on Sunday, April 22nd, who challenged the legality of his arrest and refused bail, also came to light during these days.

Finally, on May 22nd, a demonstration was held in Quebec City. Some 150 people took to the streets and headed toward the City Hall

Building where there was a meeting in session. Upon arrival, about 50 protestors got inside and disrupted the meeting, pressing for the City Council to back a demand for an independent inquiry of the police work during the Summit. Outside the city flag was brought down and replaced with a black flag. Other solidarity demonstrations also took place in Toronto and Montreal. Harassment continued as two people were arrested after the Montreal demo for allegedly having Molotov cocktails in their bags, while two others were fined in Quebec City for wearing scarves and making "too much noise".

The 'Germinal Five' were finally released on conditions on May 28th. These conditions not only include "having a good behavior" and "keeping the peace" but also forbade from communicating with each other. They must also report every two weeks to the police officer who conducted the investigation against them, and their parents were forced to agree to pay a fine of \$10,000 if they break these conditions.

## Where to Next?

Right now, as the energy of the Summit has died out and all of the political prisoners that could realistically be freed have been, spirit is low in Quebec City. With more than 300 trials to start this autumn, and a handful of activists to deal with this massive work, CASA is clearly exhausted. We've raised a lot of money, but we will need much more. Hopefully, people will be able to take some rest during the summer and we can develop a political plan of actions for the autumn. Because we all know that this battle started in the street, and, ultimately, will be won there. As usual, we need to agitate, educate and organize (and not burn out while doing so!).

## Contribute to the defense fund!

In Canada, you can send a check or money order made out to "CASA" and send it to:

**Le Maquis, C.P. 48026, 110 boul Rene Levesque, Quebec (Quebec) G1R 2R5.**

In the US, make check payable to "Lower East Side Fund" and mail them to:

**Nathalie K. Williams, 2078 Second Ave. #3B, New York, NY 10029**

[mark check to "Quebec solidarity"]



# Something Did Start in Quebec City:

## North America's Revolutionary Anti-Capitalist Movement

by Cindy Milstein

When thirty-four heads of state gathered behind a chain-link barrier in Quebec City this past April to smile for the television cameras during the Summit of the Americas, it was the tear-gassing outside that garnered all the media attention. Those on both sides of the fence jockeyed to put a spin on the meaning of the massive chemical haze that choked the old city for over two days. The "insiders" claimed that as duly elected leaders of so-called free countries, they were attempting to democratically bring "freedom through free trade," and as such, those on the streets were merely troublemakers without a cause or constituency that needed to be dealt with accordingly. The "outsiders" asserted that those hiding behind the fence were the real source of violence, with "the tear gas exemplifying what nation-states are willing to do to protect capitalism and the dominant elites," and thus, a certain level of militancy was necessary to tear down the "wall of shame" that many saw as separating the powerful from the powerless.

What got lost in the smoke, however, was the substantive transformation that this particular direct action represented. For Quebec City's convergence, more than anything else, ushered in an explicitly anti-capitalist movement in North America. One spearheaded by anti-authoritarians (by and large, anarchists). That was our real victory in Quebec. But what caused this sudden sea change?

Serendipitously, one fence; self-consciously, two groups.

It was this movement's collective "good luck" that law enforcement officials and politicians determined on a fence as the heart of their strategy to counter the protests. "It didn't start in Quebec," one could say; last June, in Windsor, Ontario, similar trade discussions went off without a hitch behind chain-link, and barbed wire served nicely to make Davos, Switzerland, an impenetrable fortress this past winter for the World Economic Forum. The state-sponsored prophylactic in Quebec City did in fact ward off unwanted intruders: the summit meetings went on, generally unimpeded. Thus, if the fence had remained merely a physical barricade, it could have been counted as a security success.

Unfortunately for Jean Chretien, George W., and their cohorts, the ten-foot fence became a larger-than-life symbolic divide, in essence demanding, "Which side are you on?"

The contrasts could not have been sharp-

er. Closed meetings and secret documents inside; open teach-ins and publicly distributed literature outside. The cynical co-optation of "democracy" via a gratuitous "clause" as a cover for free-floating economic exploitation versus genuine demands for popular control and mutual aid in matters such as economics, ecology, politics, and culture. The raising of glasses for champagne toasts versus the rinsing of eyes from chemical burns.

All of the recent direct actions have, of course, also focused on targets that were figurative to a certain extent. Indeed, the symbolic value of these spectacular showdowns is an essential ingredient in the fight to win the majority of minds over to one perspective or another. But previous focal points, such as the World Trade Organization and International Monetary Fund, have shown themselves to impart somewhat ambiguous messages. The debate stirred up has often centered on how these institutions can potentially be reformed, how the social "good" they do can be salvaged from all the harm they inflict. Besides, some contend, what would replace them? It's proved difficult to move beyond questions regarding the single institution being protested other than to fall back on the buzzword "globalization." And "globalization," while suggesting a wider critique, is just as ambiguous and in no way necessarily underscoring systemic forms of domination that cannot be reformed.

Things were very different in Quebec City. From the vantage point of those on the outside, the fence served no purpose. It not only exemplified a lack of commitment to free expression on the part of the nation-states represented inside but also a further circumscribing of the possibility of freedom itself, and those political leaders trying to allege otherwise were merely revealing their hypocrisy. Hence the heightened level of militancy, illustrative of a movement increasingly intent on fundamental social transformation, directed at tearing the fence down. Yet the fence was crucial for those gathering behind it, too. Beyond providing a literal sense of security, it functioned as a stand-in for the attempt to control the debate around the Summit, as well as protect the implementation of the neoliberal agenda across the Americas. Hence the fiercely fought battle on the part of the police and military in Quebec City to hold the line.

The widespread hatred of the wall and all it embodied meant that those who took a leader-

ship role to bring it down (the libertarian anti-capitalists) stepped not only into the limelight but gained the respect and admiration of other demonstrators, much of the local populace, and a healthy cross section of the broader Canadian public. Sympathy for the first time in this North American branch of the new global movement was largely on the side of those seeking revolution. No longer the pariah or the parvenu at this direct action, the anti-authoritarian contingent was able to come into its own as a strong and visible force, rather than a marginal, marginalized, or even feared element.

To a great extent, credit must be given to two key organizations: la Convergence des luttes Anti-Capitalistes (the Montreal-based Anti-Capitalist Convergence, or CLAC) and le Comité d'Accueil du Sommet des Amériques (the Quebec City-based Summit of the Americas Welcoming Committee, or CASA). For starters, it was a brilliant stroke to stake out a nonreformist posture not only in CLAC's name but in the very theme for the summit weekend as well: the Carnival against Capitalism. An opposition to capitalism was openly front and center, both during the many months of organizing leading up to April and at the convergence itself. It was, moreover, an anarchist-influenced version of anti-capitalism. As nuanced by CLAC/CASA's short lists of organizational principles, a rejection of capitalism included a refusal of hierarchy, authoritarianism, and patriarchy, along with the proactive assertion of such values as decentralization and direct democracy. There was no mistaking the message at this direct action.

This brand of anti-capitalism, in turn, served as the substantive and radical tie that bound Quebec City's many direct action participants together. Those people organizing toward and/or coming to the direct action events could bring along their varied concerns and identities, but they were clearly doing so under the rubric of anti-capitalism. A sense of unity was achieved not through a shapeless tag such as "mobilization," nor by watering down demands until they lose their rebellious edge, nor by ignoring particularity itself. As articulated by CLAC/CASA's "Basis of Unity," "anti-capitalism" created a defined and uncompromising space for the multiplicity of individuals who see themselves as part of a revolutionary project.

Crucial in this necessary yet delicate balancing act between a striving for unification and individuation was the strategically smart



phrase "diversity of tactics" in CLAC/CASA's statements of principles. Many have written elsewhere that this principle allowed for heightened militancy in Quebec City, or that it diffused the often poorly formulated and argued "violent" versus "nonviolent" debates that seem to fracture this movement internally. Each claim rings partially true, yet both miss the forest for the trees. The diversity of tactics notion helped to unmask the anti-capitalism element, and in showing its full face, revealed how influential (and even appealing) it is as a force in this new global movement.

In the recent past, there have been thousands of libertarian anti-capitalists at North American direct actions, but they remained separated and thus largely hidden "by dress, role (such as medic, media, or communications), age, ideological tendency, strategic notions, and so on. Anti-authoritarians "converged" together at mass direct actions, but sadly, the "Revolutionary Anti-Capitalist Bloc" was generally seen as synonymous with the black bloc, meaning that a radical political outlook appeared to have minimal support. The blame lies not with the black bloc or the fact that many anarchists choose to wear other colors. Instead, the problem has been the inability to combine this spectrum of anti-authoritarian styles under a transparently radical canopy.

The full line in CLAC/CASA's "Basis of Unity" statement on a diversity of tactics altered that equation. It reads: "Respecting a diversity of tactics, the CLAC [or CASA, respectively] supports the use of a variety of creative initiatives, ranging from popular education to direct action." By embracing on an equal footing "education" and "action," thereby also breaking down the supposed theory versus practice divide, the conflation of "militancy" with "radicalism" was shattered. One wasn't a revolutionary because one was a priori a militant; and this indirectly affirmed that not all revolutionaries can afford to take the same risk: just compare a healthy eighteen year old to wheelchair-bound octogenarian. (As a corollary, it showed that being militant doesn't necessarily make one a revolutionary, either. There were plenty of disgruntled Quebecois youth on the streets each night during the convergence intent on mischief and it's highly doubtful that they shared CLAC/CASA's principles.)

The diversity clause, in essence, acknowledged that an opposition to systemic domination such as capitalism and nation-states could and should take many forms if a majoritarian movement is to be built. The principle did not make room under the anti-capitalist banner for militants; they were there already. What the diversity of tactics stance did do was create a welcoming space for those many more anti-authoritarians who perceive themselves as less militant. It widened the margins

not of militancy, in other words, but of what it means to reject capitalism as an anti-authoritarian.

Thus, Quebec's anti-capitalist bloc was not one little contingent among many. It was the direct action bloc itself, precisely because it allowed anyone who subscribed to CLAC/CASA's non-reformist stance to march together regardless of how they dressed (or didn't), whether they carried a black flag or a puppet, or whether they wished to avoid arrest or tear down the fence. This was tangibly facilitated, to cite just one example, by the three-tiered, color-coding of events to indicate varying possibilities of arrest risk and militancy. As the "CrimethInc. Eyewitness Analysis" observes, this "served the purpose ahead of time of making everyone comfortable [by] setting their own level of involvement and risk." Instead of 500 or 1,000 people as at past direct actions, then, the ranks of the two anti-capitalist bloc marches during the convergence swelled to 5,000 or more, perhaps the largest in North America in recent memory.

What the 'diversity of tactics' principle translated into was a diversity of people. But this commitment to inclusiveness was only one of the ethical parameters spelled out in the rest of CLAC/CASA's "Basis of Unity." As such, rather than an assertion of difference for difference's sake, potentially implying a diverse movement emptied of content, what emerged in practice was an explicitly radical movement that was diverse. One could argue that the convergence of anti-capitalists in Quebec City wasn't diverse enough, of course. Yet it provided the first real guide of how to go about nurturing inclusiveness and unity in a way that is at once qualitative and sincere, and moreover, that allows the particular and universal to complement rather than crush each other as part of a social movement.

To return for a moment to the heightened level of militancy in Quebec City, perhaps the diversity of tactics phrase encouraged a somewhat more confrontational stance. But that pales in comparison to the catalyst exerted by the fence and police tactics as reasons why many people choose to go one step further than they ever thought they would during the direct action. Suggestive of this is a photo that appeared in the 22 April 2001 issue of 'Le Journal de Quebec' sporting a Ralph Nader

for President T-shirt, a young man lobbs a tear-gas cannister back at the police line that just shot it indiscriminately into the crowd.

Care must nevertheless be taken not to let the diversity of tactics principle morph into a

code for "anything goes." As noted by L. A. Kauffman in her recent essay, "Turning Point," already "in certain radical circles... the militant acts at the front lines are being seen and celebrated in isolation, as part of a growing mystique of insurrection." These direct actions are not yet, and perhaps will never become, insurrections. Viewing them as such could lead to the use of tactics that would be potentially suicidal for this



still-fledgling movement, as the historical examples of the Weather Underground and Red Army Faction show. Without a bit more definition to the diversity principle, and a way to make people accountable to any parameters decided on, the anti-capitalist movement is wide open to stupidity or sabotage, or at least more than it needs to be.

At the same time, it is a positive sign that the diversity of tactics phrase has worked its way into the call for an anti-capitalist bloc in D.C. at the World Bank/International Monetary Funds meetings well in advance of the actual protests this October. For where the tangible commitment to diversity of tactics really shown was in the months of organizational and educational work prior to Quebec City's convergence. Here, the tired bumpersticker phrase, "Think Globally, Act Locally," took on renewed meaning in CLAC/CASA's efforts. While they brought teach-ins to numerous cities across Canada and the United States, and put out their politics on the World Wide Web, the real key to their strategy was the attempt to win over the summit "host" city itself (where many CASA members live and work). Rather than merely organizing a weekend-long direct action, CLAC/CASA used the global and continental issues raised by the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas as a wedge into their own communities, as a way to develop radical resistance for ongoing struggles long after the tear gas clears. These Canadian-based organizers, in short, never lost sight of the need to link the global to the local, and to do such community work openly as radicals.



They thereby succeeded in one of the more difficult tasks: bringing anti-capitalism home.

A few examples suffice to illustrate the scope of their community activism. For instance, they asked Quebec City inhabitants to "adopt a protester," which meant agreeing to house and hence have relatively intimate contact with an anti-capitalist out-of-towner during the convergence. CLAC/CASA's massive leafletting effort in Quebec City, on the streets and door to door, included handing out thousands of copies of a four-page bilingual tabloid that tried to debunk fear-provoking stereotypes and urged townfolks to "unite in one big anarchist contingent on A21." [note: this was NEFAC's initiative, not a CLAC/CASA project - ed]. The anti-capitalist organizers worked in and with grassroots neighborhood associations, and helped ensure that a no-

buildings in Quebec City over to CLAC/CASA for such things as a convergence center, sleeping facilities (housing over 2,500 people), and rallying point for the two anti-capitalist marches is testimony to these two groups' grassroots efforts. As were the signs in local shopkeepers' windows: "We support you."

CLAC/CASA have proved that it is possible not just to bring thousands into your city but to also work closely with the thousands already there to radicalize and mobilize them for the convergence and beyond. Given that the cities where summits and ministers meet constantly rotate from Seattle, Washington, D.C., and Ottawa, to Prague, Genoa, and even Qatar, many anti-capitalists will probably get their chance at "hosting" a convergence and could therefore view it as an opportunity to link global concerns to on-the-ground local

struggles. Left in the wake of summits and direct actions could be not a small, weary group of anarchist organizers but a large, invigorated radical milieu along with the foundations for resistance attempts in numerous cities across the global.

For it is not a matter of community organizing versus splashy direct actions but how to balance the two so they reinforce, com-

plement, and build on each other in a way that escalates a revolutionary movement globally as the efforts of CLAC/CASA has shown. While journalist Naomi Klein has been an insightful commentator on this movement, she is wrong in dubbing direct actions as "McProtests." Putting aside the fact that each direct action is not alike but borrows from, rejects, and/or transforms elements of previous actions, that is, there is often a generative, creative process at work as Quebec City exemplified, mass actions also afford moments of real gain that would otherwise not be possible if resistance and reconstruction were merely parochial affairs. And they give people hope.

The real task of social transformation has only just been glimpsed, of course. Quebec City's convergence felt revolutionary, yet it was by no means a revolution. CLAC/CASA members, like other libertarian anti-capitalists globally, are a long way from helping to turn

the places they live into free cities in a free society. At least to date, it also appears that they have done little work, much less published thinking, on what a reconstructive vision might look like, as well as how to move toward it in their communities and this movement. Rather than just a Carnival against Capitalism, a carnival for something might have better provided the utopian thrust necessary to sustain and give direction to the difficult struggle ahead.

Nonetheless, by working locally and globally, by nurturing diversity in the arms of an explicitly anti-authoritarian politics, CLAC/CASA, with the help of a flimsy fence that became a mighty symbol, motivated thousands who came to and live in Quebec City to hoist the anti-capitalist banner onto center stage. Something did start in Quebec: a distinctly radical movement in North America. Now the hard work of self-consciously shaping and building that movement must begin.

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arrest zone was strategically placed in the residential neighborhood abutting the fenced-in summit meetings to create a sense of security for the locals as well as nonlocals. After the convergence, members of CASA pitched in to help other city residents decontaminate the urban parks affected by tear gas.

This community organizing campaign, slipping into public relations at times, put a positive human face to the negative media (and state/police) portrait of anarchists and gave locals some of the knowledge they needed to begin to judge (and hopefully reject) capitalism for themselves. It probably convinced numerous Quebecois to participate in the days of resistance (or at least provide water and bathrooms, as many did), and much more than that, built a solid foundation of support, sympathy, and trust in the community for longer-term projects. The fact that Laval University gave several of its comparatively luxurious



# Did We 'Radicalize This'?

## An Insider's Look at the Quebec Protests

by Nicolas Phebus (Groupe Anarchist Emile-Henry)

Activists in Quebec City lead a powerful, creative, and fun grassroots campaign against the Summit of the Americas, the FTAA, and the hated security fence, proving that there's no need for radicals to be boring, marginalized and isolated. Much has been written about the positive response of the local population to demonstrators - black bloc militants and peaceniks alike - it is my opinion that this yearlong grassroots campaign had a lot to do with it.

### Autumn 2000: When Anti-Globalization Comes Home

The media started to seriously talk about the Summit of the Americas during the spring and summer of 2000. It was just after Seattle and Quebec City's own little Seattle - the Youth Summit in February 2000, a demo that turned into a 3-hours long stand off between the riot cops and angry protestors - so the news was met with apprehension by the local population. To add to the tension, the neighborhood where the Summit was to be held - Saint-Jean-Baptiste - was smashed to pieces by young rioters twice during the 1990s, and locals, even five years later, are still entertaining vivid memories of the events. The media, then, had an easy job of playing with people's fears to swing public opinion behind the security measures, and against the protestors who were depicted as 'anarchist hooligans.' Starting in September, every 'violent' demonstration anywhere in the world made front page news with a title along the lines of: "Foretaste of the Summit of the Americas?" The media also reported any and every move of the police (and there where many!). It's not surprising, in this context, that the main local anti-FTAA coalition, OQP-2001, did every thing possible to dissociate itself from 'violence,' however, by doing this they just added more of a spotlight to what they wanted to 'combat.'

On the other hand, all this media attention sparked a lot of curiosity among people as to what it was all about. People had a lot of questions about the Summit, the FTAA and globalization in general. After all, if these 34 heads of state were to meet behind fences and closed doors, it may mean they have something to hide, no? Here, we must say that the means at the disposal of the activists - flyers, web sites, workshops, the occasional leftist booktable - seemed insignificant compared to

the propaganda campaign of the mainstream media. We had no other choice than to embark on a huge popular education campaign using all of those 'insignificant means.' I won't describe all of this, but suffice to say, as early as November 2000, there were series of packed lectures on the FTAA and globalization, with more than 100 people at each. In February and March, there was more than one event scheduled a day. Workshops were given in all sorts of networks and social groups, reaching several thousands of people, from all walks of life in the Quebec City region.

However, workshops have limited appeal. People interested in these kinds of things tend to be somewhat active beforehand. We needed to reach everyone with our message. One of the first groups to try to go beyond already conscientious circles was the womens committee of OQP-2001. They formed an activist choir, 'Les Amères Noël,' mixing two old traditions: that of agit-prop street theater and that of changing the words of well-known Christmas songs. They went everywhere - shopping malls, street corners, parties, demos - to sing their radical anti-FTAA, anti-patriarchal and anti-capitalist songs, and to distribute their own small informational flyers mocking the US dollar. They were also the first non-sectarian affinity group to emerge, as they wanted to bring a feminist perspective to the struggle and didn't care very much about the rift between 'non-violence' and 'diversity of tactics.' They were met with almost immediate success.

### The Campaign Against the Security Perimeter

For various historical, social and political reasons, St-Jean-Baptiste - the last 'working class' neighborhood of the uptown - has been for the last 30 years a hotbed of radical activism. Some local anarchists and radicals have been active for a few years in the organization that is responsible for most of this local activism: the Comité Populaire Saint-Jean-Baptiste. The Comité Populaire is a 25-year-old community group that is part anti-poverty group, part citizens committee, and part popular education group. Although it is by no means 'well funded,' the organization still has a few valuable resources, including a widely read free quarterly newspaper, *l'Infobourg*, a weekly lecture program, *l'Université Populaire*, an office in the middle of the neighborhood with computers, fax and telephone, and a little bit of money.

In November, the members of the Comité Populaire decided at their general assembly to devote time, energy and resources to the struggle against the Summit of the Americas. In fact, it was decided to organize a campaign against the security measures of the Summit, to not take part in the 'non-violence' and 'diversity of tactics' rift, and take part in the struggle during the Summit itself. The Comité Populaire chose to approach the struggle against the Summit of the Americas via a struggle against the security measures because we analyzed that that was where the Summit clashed with the interests of local people. In the beginning, the issue of the fence didn't seem to gather much attention from activists circles - many thought it was a secondary issue - however, we saw it as the main point of friction for ordinary people. Also, we saw the question of meaningless democracy and repression of political and social rights as a central issue of capitalist globalization.

The campaign against the fence began in January, when the Comité Populaire called the first meeting to organize around this issue. About 25 activists came: local people, activists from l'ADDS (a welfare rights union), and youth activists from CASA and OQP-2001. One of the most interesting things about these meetings is that organizationally everything was done collectively and democratically: sub-committees were formed and given general guide lines, and the results of their work was then adopted in general meetings which were open to all. This directly democratic process was much like what was happening in CASA, but it's interesting that it was possible in a coalition where both "activists" and "normal people" were present.

The first thing the coalition did was to collectively decide on a plan of action. We cannot overestimate how important this was, as it gave everyone a sense of direction. In our case, while we could have been drawn into a flurry of little actions, we chose instead to focus on two big events: a public assembly and a mass action. We spent a few meetings discussing these plans of action and the political angle of the campaign. There was debate over whether we should explain the Summit and FTAA to the people we wanted to reach, or to focus on our opposition to the fence and security measures that affected the neighborhood. We finally chose to focus on the fence and to oppose it on the ground that it was an attack on basic civil rights such as freedom of expression and movement and the right to peaceful assembly and demonstrate. All of



this was explained in a pamphlet that was produced by a group of activists living in the neighborhood, but of different tendencies (one from the Comité Populaire, one from OQP-2001 and one from CASA). As the targeted audience of this pamphlet was the whole neighborhood, we decided to first print 4,500 copies, which is just slightly more than the number of doors in Saint-Jean-Baptiste...

## February 2001: The Campaign Took Off

Our first target was the office where the RCMP was registering the residents and workers inside of the security perimeter. We were there distributing our leaflets and chatting with people. Different groups started to pick up the campaign and do actions around it. One night it was 'les Amères Noël', another night it was the action committee of OQP-2001, who brought banners and leaflets downtown. The different student groups also did theater in their colleges and distributed leaflets. The biggest action was by the CASA 'action committee' who organized half a dozen different teams of activists to perform street theater against the fence. They had built some 'personal perimeters' for everyone, using chicken wire, and there were fake cops trying to protect the people behind the perimeter from those who wanted to give leaflets.

Undercover cops arrested one of the teams because they didn't identify themselves when questioned. This proved to be a stupid move on the cop's behalf, as the arrest was illegal and the Comité Populaire generated a lot of media coverage. Many locals asked: "if this is how they treat activists two months before the Summit, what will it look like during the Summit?" We also made a strong point about 'freedom of expression'. After that event, everyone in downtown knew that we were distributing leaflets, and many people wanted copies (there was probably a "subversive" attraction to possessing a leaflet that the cops didn't want you to read...). Also, when we chose to go door-to-door explaining our campaign, everyone knew what we were talking

about, so the reception was good.

We must say that the attitude of the authorities, especially the cops, helped us a lot. They didn't want to meet with people, or give information on the security perimeter. People were forced to turn to us for information. We just had the information that was in the news, but since we contextualized it, we looked like we were providing more information than the cops were willing to give! As for the political authorities, they didn't give a damn and basically thought we were just a bunch of troublemakers. They said it wasn't that important, and it was basically in the interest of the locals to protect them from 'anarchist hooligans.' However, since they reduced the fence size and left most of the local shops out of the perimeter, people were forced to acknowledge that it wasn't to protect 'them' but instead to protect the image of the ruling class. The arrogance of the authorities, who just didn't want to answer legitimate questions, did the rest.

On the other hand, the fact that CLAC and CASA (who were supposed to be the 'anarchist hooligans') organized a public activist tour with someone from the Comité Populaire explaining to outside activists what the neighborhood was all about, helped a lot. People

saw us in the news touring the city and explaining the issues, and realized that these radical activists must not be that bad after all. Even the mayor had to acknowledge it, and change his strategy (instead of talking 'security,' he started to talk about the 'Peoples' Summit' and so on).

At the end of February, it was clear we had succeeded in making a political issue out of something that was at best

an annoyance, or, at worst, a danger to the local people. At about that time the cops chose to hire a 'public relations firm', saying that they had never before encountered so much opposition. However, we didn't know at the time if, outside of the huge media impact, there was a real impact on the local population. The weekend prior to our public assembly, we published a new leaflet specifically on the event, and started distributing it on the street (we distributed 2,000 of

these). The response was good, but we definitely knew we had struck a chord on March 5th, when more than 150 locals came to our assembly. This assembly was a bit weird. Even though we had invited the cops, the Summit officials, the Human Rights League and local politicians, no 'authorities' came. So the panel was basically made up of five local anarchist activists from the Comité Populaire and the campaign. People in the room felt that the attitude of the authorities was a slap in the face. It ended up being a dialogue between the campaigners and the locals, exchanging points of views and analysis on repression, civil rights and globalization. The week after, the same thing happened in lower town at another public assembly called by the welfare rights' union and another citizens committee. At this event, a hundred people showed up, and again, the 'authorities' didn't. So once again, it was an activist-population dialogue about the campaign, globalization and the Summit of the Americas.

## March 2001: The Burial of Civil Rights

When the campaign voted in favor of the mass action, it wasn't clear exactly what we wanted. Obviously we wanted an action that would show opposition to the fence, but there hadn't been a decision made between specialized direct action, huge street theater or a more traditional demo. The fact is, at the time we didn't really know what kind of impact we would have, and so didn't know if the action would be an opportunity for the population to show opposition, or an opportunity for the activists to do some more agit-prop. Just like other aspects of the campaign, a committee was formed of people interested in organizing the action. After much discussion, the people came back with the idea of a fake funeral. The advantage was that it was a mix between street theater and a demonstration. Also, it didn't really matter how many people showed up, since the symbol and image would be the same whether we were 50 in the street or 200. The thing we didn't want was another angry demonstration because we felt it would play directly into the media stereotype of activists (boring, old and cliché). So we ended up with the idea of a funeral march and the burial of civil rights.

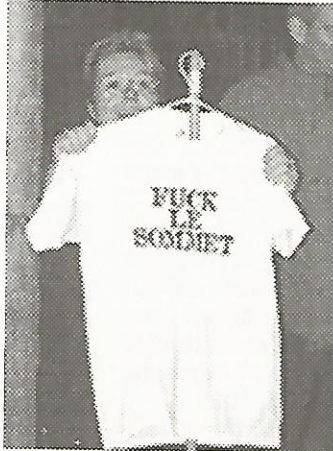
On March 17th, people started to gather at the Parc de l'Amérique Française. There was 'Les Amères Noël', who were supposed to cry at the front, and sing special radical funeral songs; there were twelve special coffin bearers; there was a fake priest and so on. The CLAC had brought a bus of Montreal activists, people from various groups that worked on the campaign were there, and there ended up being some 400 locals... This was far beyond our



*Basic liberties are put to rest in Quebec City*



wildest expectations (we only made 100 placards!). With about two dozen dedicated activists we managed to mobilize 400 people! This alone made it the largest local demonstration in the 25-years history of the Comité Populaire, and among the strongest of the local popular movement, past and present. The crowd was really diverse with moms and kids, older people, and a vast majority of 'normal people' (plus the usual 'activists'). The march proceeded to Rue St-Jean, and then up to the Place d'Youville, where the mock funeral took place in front of the office of the Summit of the Americas. Instead of having the usual suspects from the Comité Populaire, we chose to give the microphone for the main speech to a radical feminist activist who lives in the perimeter. This way, the links between the fence, globalization, capitalism and patriarchy were made.



*A popular sentiment in the St. Jean-Baptiste neighborhood*

During the night of March 17, an affinity group applied some direct action upon the fence and tore sections down. In the snow, the group wrote with red juice the simple word "démocratie" and left. A communiqué saying that the action was in solidarity with the march was posted to CMAQ (Quebec Indymedia) and then made it to the mainstream media. The police tried to paint this as 'vandalism'. For those who did it, it was a way to show a 'diversity of tactics'.

## April 2001: On to the Carnival of Resistance Against Capitalism

It was during the first week of April that the fence was erected in downtown Quebec City. The people and media spontaneously called it the "Wall of Shame." It was a shock for many people who didn't bother much about it before. The fence in itself probably did much more than our campaign to radicalize people. From that point on there was no need for further agitation against the fence. New graffiti appeared every day. People and groups in Saint-Jean-Baptiste took it on themselves to redecorate the fence and put all kind of objects on it.

On our side, at the Comité Populaire, we were moving on to the mobilization for the Carnival of Resistance Against Capitalism itself. Most of us were active in CASA, and it never crossed our minds that the Comité Populaire could organize something during the Summit itself. To us the job of the Comité Populaire was more or less over. However, that's not how the folks in the neighborhood saw it. For them it seemed our job was just beginning... They wanted us to organize something during the Summit on the main street of

the neighborhood. They wanted a 'green zone' demonstration/street party directly at the edge of the fence on St-Jean! Frankly, we didn't even think it was possible. That's probably where we stopped trying to radicalize people, and started getting radicalized ourselves. Our own idea of what was, and was not, possible to do as a 'community group' changed dramatically when we realized that a sizable number of people wanted us to organize our own part of the Carnival with them. That's also when, personally, I realized that it was maybe more radical for me to be in the middle of the neighborhood, with locals, then in the 'red zone' (a shock in itself!).

The problem was that most of the people with whom we worked with during the campaign against the fence had other engagements. We had to change the team a bit. That's where years of involvement in the neighborhood, working around various issues with all kinds of people - single moms, working poor, artists, youths, merchants, etc. - proved to be essential. In less than two weeks, we mobilized a new group to organize our 'green zone' activities. The response was inspiring: dozens of people took it upon themselves to organize and staff a free food table, an infoshop, a place for kids, different musical events, and so on. On the other hand we were able to produce a special 16-page issue of the Comité's newspaper, and distribute 9,000 copies of it door-to-door the weekend before the Summit. In this newspaper we tried to explain everything we thought was important to understand the opposition to the Summit. We had articles explaining 'diversity of tactics' and the system of three color zones, the non-reformist approach, the links between globalization and welfare reform, the Black Bloc, and so on. And of course a front-page article urging people to take to the streets and "occupy the neighborhood." Judging from the number of phone calls we received during the week, it was well received.

The 'green zone' on Saint-Jean was a smashing success. Thousands of locals showed up, many feeling so safe they even came with their kids. It was also used by at least three different affinity groups to carry non-violent symbolic actions (which probably wouldn't have happened otherwise). That's where the 'women's action' took place, that's also where the toilet paper was thrown by the clown bloc. This said, we did make a few compromises while organizing it. The biggest is

that we felt that, as organizers, we had a responsibility to do whatever was possible to ensure that it was a safe place for everyone. Although we knew that in reality this wouldn't necessarily make the place any safer, we did communicate to the police that this was a 'green zone' where trouble was not expected. We didn't ask for a permit, but they gave us one anyway. We also organized a 'security team' which scouted the whole city to know where the riot squads were all day. One compromise was that, although it was an anti-capitalist day of actions, we did collaborate with the merchants on the street and tried to ensure their collaboration. This way, many boarded storefronts became free expression billboards. The action wasn't 'pure,' but we think all of it was worth the price.

## June 2001: Back To The Future

In the past, I've often felt that to many anarchists 'radicalizing social movements' meant organizing a black bloc, doing a direct action, building a 'pure' anarchist mobilization, or having a lot of black flags at the end of the demo. This is not what we did in Quebec City, in fact we made a lot of compromises, but I still think we helped to radicalize a lot of people. Of course, the events in themselves radicalized people, but I think our campaign and involvement explaining the issues at hand had a lot to do with it.

This experience however brings a lot of questions with it. As a federation, NEFAC's strategy is based on involvement in the class struggle, to push for the autonomy of the class, and to radicalize - in the sense of going to the root of problems - social movements. We say that this involvement can be autonomous, like in a black bloc, or as direct participants in a movement. In this case we chose the latter. Our involvement in CASA and Comité Populaire helped to popularize anarchist principles and methods, however, since we are not supermen and superwomen, our specifically anarchist intervention suffered. To put it clearly one cannot be at the same time at the forefront of a struggle and at the back in a red and black bloc.

If we are to be successful in what we want to do as a federation, that is influence the struggle of our class, we will be confronted with this more often. Sooner or later we will have to answer the burning question of the day: what is more important, building a mass libertarian movement with all its contradictions, or having a smaller but pure anarchist 'movement' (be it with leaflets, black blocs, direct actions or whatever)? Indeed, what is more important: the movement or its anarchist component.

Of course, both are important. But still, we have to know where our priorities are. And for the moment, unless we grow or get better organized, we cannot always do both.



# Awkwesasne!

## How a Direct Action Didn't Happen

by Eric Laurson (NYC Ya Basta!)

*Tonight, we are asking you not to go through Awkwesasne out of respect and to work with us in the future so that the destruction in our prophecies won't happen.*

The nearly 400 activists (from all over the country) who had arrived in Burlington, Vermont by April 17th to take on the FTAA and the US/Canadian border regime, were staring at each other in shock. A delegation of "dignitaries" from the Awkwesasne Mohawk community had just faced us in a cavernous hall at the University of Vermont, and had told us to kindly stay off the tribe's land.

Communications, so to speak, had broken down. A few of us knew the Mohawks were not exactly united in welcoming us, but most had not until just now. The inescapable fact was that the first Awkwesasne Mohawks that 99% of us had actually met had told us to go away and not listen to the ones who had invited us.

*There are individuals in our community who don't understand the protocols of our community but call themselves 'traditional.'*

Something had changed. When and how was not clear, but suddenly we were in doubt why we were in Burlington and what our objective was. Most of us thought we were here to show solidarity with a Mohawk community that had been divided and exploited by the US and Canadian governments, to take direct action against the falsity of political "borders," and to take part in the resistance against the Free Trade Area of the Americas.

But what did we really know about the community we were going to pass through? Over the next day we rehashed what the Mohawk "dignitaries" had said and how we should proceed. One group of activists suggested we adopt a Plan B. Their proposal:

*To go to the fish fry, but to keep open to crossing at another border point. To stay in contact with the Mohawks on the Canadian side so if we need to choose another point, we can do that.*

But where would that other point be? The evening before we were supposed to pass through the customs booths that arbitrarily separated the Mohawk community into Ontario and New York branches, it was hard to tell if we could concoct an alternate route. What did we know about the border? Where else could we cross, and how, if not in a very public place with hundreds of Mohawk and Canadian allies?

What kind of opportunity to cross could a caravan with hundreds of activists possibly find if we didn't get across at Awkwesasne?

Back in the meeting hall, we tried to figure out what our options were. But given how little we knew about this community, there was really only one: to follow our original plan and caravan toward the border, letting our Mohawk allies - the "warrior society" who 99% only knew the existence of by hearsay - take the lead.

*There will be no bursting Canadian customs, no blocking the border. If you're turned back, do not block the customs booths and do civil disobedience. Follow the directions of our Mohawk allies.*

So it was clear that not everyone in the Awkwesasne community welcomed us (even if the unwelcoming ones were lackeys of the US and Canadian governments, which well might be the case), and that the warrior society itself now seemed to be backing down from their previous militant position. Instead of a direct action against a set of customs posts, we seemed to be walking into a symbolic event that for some people could prove very risky.

Shawn Brant, the Mohawk activist and organizer with the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty who appeared to have initiated the border crossing idea, phoned into the spokescouncil meeting, urging us to ignore what we had heard the night before. But he offered no reassurance that the action would be militant or would end with Canadian customs letting us all through. A spokescouncil dragged on as people tried to coax some reassurances out of the small group of activists who had actually had frequent contact with the warrior society.

*I assumed - and a lot of people assumed - there'd be no border checking. Some of us came from 10 to 15 different states. This whole fiasco with the Mohawks won't have a happy ending unless we have a Plan B.*

The few people who knew the warrior society admitted that their own contacts with the Mohawks were limited, and that - to put it mildly - plans had changed a bit.

*The action has changed its nature over the last couple of months, due to concerns at the reservation. Maybe this could have been better communicated...I don't have any magical answers.*

No magical answers appeared the following afternoon, after the warrior society's welcoming fish fry, as we drove across the bridge toward Canada. Hundreds of protesters were marching in front, while a procession of cars followed. As soon as the on-foot protesters reached the Canadian customs booths on the island, the whole procession ground to a halt.

Nothing was happening except a speech by Shawn Brant that made it clear we were going to be passing through Immigration one by one. Those people with arrest records should be prepared to be turned back. Of course, it was really all up to the Immigration officials' discretion - if they didn't like your looks and thought you might be a threat to Canadian national security, you could be turned back or even detained.

After a very long wait, we were told that some people were being cuffed and sent back over the border. In a state of semi-confusion, we called a spokescouncil. Stacy Boots, one of our Mohawk hosts, advised us to cooperate with the Immigration officials. The primary goal was no disruption on Mohawk land. There was nothing more to do here.

We piled back in our cars and vans, turned around and drove back over the bridge and through US customs. We only vaguely understood that quite a lot of activists had actually been admitted to Canada and were on their way to Quebec City. These included the few who had had close contact with the Mohawks, as well as some Mohawks who had joined us. But most people who had been hoping to cross over were now back on the New York State Mohawk lands, a place none of us knew, with incomplete communications and no one to give us any informed idea what to do next.

The sun was going down and we needed a place to regroup. It took hours to find one - both the Mohawk police and the state troopers hustled us from one intersection to another, with constant delays in between. At one point we landed back in the vacant stretch by the highway where we had had the fish fry earlier. But as soon as we started to climb out of our vehicles to discuss the situation, the cops changed their minds and ordered us to get moving again.

Finally, we pulled up in a big rest area. Some people wanted to spend the night looking for another crossing. Others wanted to get back to Burlington - but didn't have a clear idea how to get there. Others suggested that Plattsburg, New York was closer, as well as the location that our US-side legal support had picked for its office during the FTAA summit.

There was no way to reach a consensus about what to do next. We were all on our own. Getting the best directions we could, some of us set off for Plattsburg, others for Burlington. A few went looking for another way across. Some of us made it through while others were sent



back or detained up to two days. Those who had passed Immigration on the 19th mostly met up with the OCAP-organized caravan from Kingston, Ontario and made it to Quebec City in time to play a part in the very successful protests. But our anti-border action was a non-event, and there was no great US-Canadian-Mohawk caravan to drive into Quebec City.

## Not A Success, Not A Disaster

The Awkwesasne crossing story is loaded with cheap ironies, but my favorite is this: It was not a disaster. The day after (April 20), the Toronto Star ran a headline that read, "Summit protesters hold peaceful march at border." "Both protesters and police were indeed on their best behaviour and the march was peaceful and orderly," the story noted. What other press accounts there were of the crossing took more or less the same tone.

A couple of weeks later, a "Statement from Mohawk Community Organizers" circulated:

*We planned the April 19th event with the intention of organizing our people, so that we could legitimately play a part in the plans to defeat the government. We acknowledge the mistakes we made in organizing, however, these tactical errors should not override the success of the day. [...] We have opened the door to building links with non-native people and organizations. We stood together to demonstrate to governments that they will no longer be able to isolate us from each other.*

Maybe it was dumb luck, or perhaps a favorable bounceback from both the press and Mohawks who were concerned above all about possible violence. At the least, then, we met everyone's minimal standard for a "successful" action that day on the bridge.

It's been difficult for many of us to just accept this and move on, however. The whole episode cries out for self-criticism. Folks involved in planning the crossing ranged from anarchist to reformist, but the labels came to mean very little in Burlington, in Awkwesasne, or on the road back. We were all committed to organizing this action in a nonhierarchical, directly-democratic, consensus-driven manner that showed respect for our hosts and that linked the localized oppression of the Mohawks with the larger issues of globalization and the FTAA.

We avoided a violent disaster, and we followed through on our commitments to the Mohawks who invited us, showing respect and following their directions. Maybe in the future we'll find a way to join in resisting the social and environmental destruction that the Canadian and US governments are determined to bring down on their communities. If so, we'll first have to deepen our ties considerably.

But our mistakes could cost us a lot in the long run too. Many activists had come from long distances because they trusted that the groups endorsing the crossing had planned a direct action, not just a demonstration, and that we had the Mohawk community's support. Were they wrong to assume this? Probably so, but no one told them otherwise until two nights before the caravan. Some dedicated activists lost confidence in each other, which could make it harder for them to act together in the future.

We let our commitment to openness and consensus slip. Only a handful of activists from the NYC Direct Action Network and the NYC Ya Basta! Collective had actually met with members of the warrior society, and of these only one or two had solid ties. Yet hardly anyone bothered to question why we were going to Awkwesasne instead of directly to Quebec City in the weeks before we got to Burlington. When someone actually asked why we should be gambling everything on one crossing point, we were told that such questions did not show solid commitment to the Mohawks.

No one had all the details about how the crossing was going to take place or exactly what support our Mohawk allies would give us. But instead of questioning this, we focused on the goal - to demonstrate solidarity with the Mohawks, to expose a "globalization" that tolerates borders which divide communities, and to tie the struggles of indigenous peoples together with the struggle against the FTAA.

By the 18th, that wasn't enough for some of us. At the spokescouncil, as we tried to figure out where the truth lay between what the Mohawk dignitaries had said the night before and the reassurances we had just heard from Shawn, a few people used an important word: "autonomy." They were being asked to give up their ability to operate as autonomous individuals and as an autonomous, leaderless community in order to support the struggle and accept the leadership of a nonwhite community.

That much was okay - no one was arguing that as a mostly-white activist movement, we don't need to stop acting as if the initiative always has to come from our ranks, instead of from the communities we profess to support. But when we don't even know what's planned and how much support we can count on, how can we hope to act independently if things start to go wrong? And how to reconcile a situation where vital information was either nonexistent, or was being monopolized by a few individuals, with our commitment to creating a open society where one group doesn't dominate any other?

Again, this wasn't a case of the anarchists versus the authoritarian leftists - some of the people who were most committed to following the 'Brant Mohawk faction' were anarchists. It's not fair to pin the blame on a handful of people, either. I can't explain why I didn't question the need to exponentially complicate

the goal of participating in the anti-FTAA protests by adding a solidarity action with a Native American community on top of it - especially when that community has an extremely complex history and internal politics that none of us fully understood. All of us, collectively, failed to ask questions when we should have, and to think through what our goals were and how we were pursuing them.

*Everything we've done up to now has been racist. We've failed to contact all the parties from the start, so to say any one configuration is racist and pretend that one group is not, is bullshit.*

The question of white "leadership" of the post-Seattle movement and how to bring the struggle against neoliberalism together with communities of color has been an issue almost from the moment the WTO protests hit the headlines in late 1999. On some level, many of us probably hope that it can be resolved in action, on the streets and in places like Awkwesasne where we can stop thinking about how to make it work and instead simply join up and work together. Many of us may have unspokenly hoped this would happen right up to the time our caravan moved onto the bridge.

Of course this didn't happen. Reconciling the need for white activists to consciously give up their privileges and accept direction from non-whites, with the need to keep working to create communities that aren't based on hierarchy and "leadership" is necessary but extremely difficult. Some white activists need to learn that any "revolutionary" movement that doesn't include the full and equal participation of communities like the Mohawks can never truly change society. But others need to remember that merely following the directives of activists from communities of color because of who they are isn't revolutionary either, because it doesn't guarantee that the people following directions will be bringing all their vision and creativity to the task.

Lack of information and openness doomed the Awkwesasne crossing, as the need to accept the direction of our Mohawk allies turned into an excuse for us not to ask questions or look too closely at what we were actually putting ourselves at risk to do. Ironically, this was a consensus-driven process - if all of us had not tacitly accepted these rules, events might have taken a different course.

Maybe we should have turned down the Mohawk warriors' invitation and instead looked for a more practical route to Quebec City. An opportunity lost, perhaps. But at least we wouldn't have had to read the following quote, which appeared in a local newspaper the following day:

*We never intended to go to Quebec City. We just wanted to hand out some leaflets.*



# Anarchy in the Northeast:

## The Resurgence of Anarchist Collectives in the Region

### NEW YORK

In New York City, we are forming a group that will become a NEFAC collective if all goes well. Our group presently consists of six members, yet more are said to be on the way. Most of the members seem to be around 40 years old (surprisingly enough), yet there are some younger 20-somethings too. All of us seem to be well experienced at both debating theory (whether anarcho-syndicalist, council communist, or insurrectionist) and participating in direct actions of various kinds.

We share a desire to combine good theoretical discussion with effective practice, allowing both to develop as one feature enhances the other. We will probably first focus on different forms of propaganda, such as holding educational forums, agitating in the workplaces, distributing a newsletter, and posting information in public places. We will be open to more militant actions when necessary, whether this involves defending squats and community spaces or using direct action to fight against exploitation in the workplace. And we will all be committed to the continuing international mass actions, likely participating with an anti-capitalist bloc.

One of our motives for forming this group is that oppositional groups within the present "movement" have proved insufficient for us. Though most of us are partial to the IWW, we see its syndicalist philosophy as being useful mainly for workplace organizing, yet limiting in other social contexts. And though some of us have participated a lot in NYC Direct Action Network, we find that group ideologically fuzzy and lacking in class consciousness. Using documents such as NEFAC's Aims and Principles as a starting point, we hope to create a group that is both flexible and focused in its collective opposition to capitalism, the state, and all the related social structures, media, and hegemony. In the process, we hope to help create a genuinely lasting anarcho-communist alternative.

### ONTARIO

*Freiheit* is a newly formed anarchist collective currently made up of six members (and two supporters) from Toronto. Since the collective is still in the formative stage, political activity and future projects are still being discussed among members.

However, there has been a decision to apply for membership within NEFAC (and, as a first contribution to the federation, translate the 'aims and principles' and constitution into Farsi).

### CONNECTICUT

The *May '68 Collective* is a small group of about 5-6 people located in the greater Hartford region of Connecticut. Generally, we define ourselves as anarchists "without adjectives". Currently, we have only met a few times as a collective, but we have worked together in the past in other Connecticut based activist groups.

Forming a Food Not Bombs chapter in our area is a tentative project as well as a campaign to save one of the last pieces of untouched wilderness in Connecticut from capitalist exploitation. In the future, we hope to construct viable counter-institutions. Basically, create a local anti-authoritarian counter-culture.

Our name, 'May '68', is sort of a long term goal for ourselves (general strikes, factory/university occupations, insurrection all around) - something for us to aspire to.

### MASSACHUSETTS

Anarchists in the Amherst-Northampton area have been working on getting more organized. Since February, some twenty anarchists have been meeting with the goal of starting a new anarchist organization in the area. The organization is currently still closed

to new members and is working on its process, structure and politics; but in the near future the still nameless organization will unleash a campaign for freedom and worldwide social revolution.

Two local anarchists also taught a well attended (about 40 people) class on Anarchism this past semester at the University of Massachusetts. In the next school year, seminars on anarchism will also be taught at Hampshire College and Mt. Holyoke College, and the third annual New England Anarchist Bookfair will be held in Amherst.

### RHODE ISLAND

*Love and Resistance* is a loose league of anarchists and activists based in Providence, RI. We came together initially to do defense fundraising for Camille Vivieros, a local tenant organizer who is facing trumped-up felony charges from an arrest during the Philly R2K protests.

We organize and promote events featuring music, video documentaries and vegan dinners. We have also worked with Books Through Bars to bring Insider Art, their collection of prisoner art, out of Philly for the first time. It has been on display for the past month in three different locations; an art space ("the Arc"), Broad St. Community Studio and currently the Direct Action for Rights and Equality (DARE) community organizing office. More recently there have been two very successful Critical Mass rides for which we have made posters and bicycle pennants.

If you need contact info: mail can be received c/o Beatrice McGeoch 109 Summer St. Providence, RI 02903 or call Fletcher at (401) 861-9864.

### VIRGINIA

A group of social anarchists from Richmond, Charlottesville, Virginia Tech and Twin Oaks Community have gotten together and decided that efforts should be made into organizing the dispersed anarchist population throughout central Virginia. As a result, we are proud to announce the formation of a new collective of central Virginia social anarchists!

To aid in this we have created an e-mail discussion list for central Virginia social anarchists. To subscribe, send a blank e-mail to: [cvsa-subscribe@topica.com](mailto:cvsa-subscribe@topica.com)



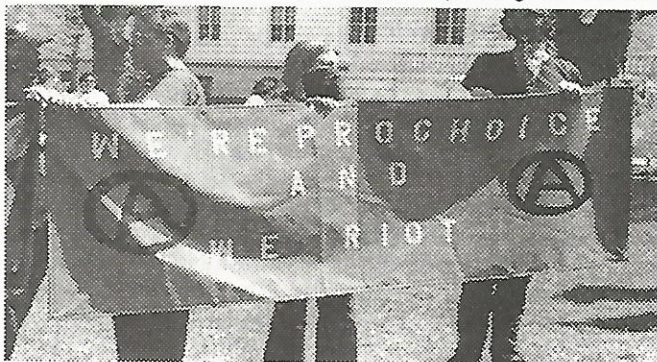
# Black Bloc Marches for Women's Reproductive Rights

**WASHINGTON, DC** - It was a hot and sunny day, but that didn't deter over 50 anarchists from the Mid-Atlantic region from donning their now famous black-clad gear and joining the NOW Emergency March for Women's Reproductive Rights on April 22. The anarchists joined over 4,000 other supporters of abortion rights for

several hours of speakers and music. The rally was followed by a feisty march past the Supreme Court and around the U.S. Capitol.

The black bloc became the center of attention as soon as it entered the park where the

rally was being held. In another typical example of activist profiling, several worried Capitol



police surrounded the bloc as they marched through the park and came to a stop so people could see the banners.

After determining that the anarchists were not going to be rioting today, they left everyone alone. Meanwhile, several hundred people attending the rally took pictures and posed for pictures in front of the banners

(including the Class War banner from the Inauguration black bloc, as well as one that said, "We're Pro-Choice and We Riot." The latter banner was quite popular with the crowd, but some cops later came by and verbally warned people that the word "riot" on the banner could give them grounds to arrest us for inciting a riot).

After several hours of boiling under the sun and listening to an endless platform of liberal speakers, the crowd surged into the street for a permitted march through the deserted Sunday streets around the Capitol. Along the way, people had fun heckling the die hard anti-abortion guys who had set up billboard scale displays of aborted fetuses. The black bloc drew the wrath of one guy who started yelling for people to remove our masks, to which they responded, "Your God is Dead!" Chants were made up along the way as people went along, including "No Church, No State, No One Else Will Decide My Mate," and "Whose Uterus? My Uterus!"

## Greedy Landlords = Angry Tenants!

**MONTREAL** - Once known as a renter's paradise, with among the cheapest rents in Canada, Montréal is now becoming a landlord/tenant warzone. A recent new real estate 'mini-boom' means big, easy bucks for speculators and slumlords and a wave of evictions and displacement of low income tenants. Some tenants, though, are fighting back.

In April, about 200 supporters of the evictees from 1193 MacKay Street in downtown Montreal took to the streets in a noisy and colorful demonstration of support for the tenants who were illegally and violently evicted. The singing, chanting demonstrators also highlighted the current critical shortage of affordable rental housing in Montreal.

'The Friends of MacKay' - an ad hoc group of concerned Montrealers and housing rights activists - were demanding that the tenants be allowed to return to their homes; that they receive adequate compensation for their suffering; that City Police be forced to reevaluate the role they play in landlord/tenant disputes; that the City respond to the current housing crisis with a program of affordable rental housing; and that tenant's rights be respected.

The Friends pointed out the bitter irony, that 1193 MacKay Street is one block north of the

infamous 'Overdale' fiasco of 1987 that rocked the city with dozens of arrests, hundreds of evictions and the destruction of an entire neighbourhood for a parking lot. Some of those evictees were subsequently evicted from 1193 MacKay.

Last Fall, the owner of the MacKay apartment block systematically harassed and intimidated the 30 tenants into leaving the building. Several tenants refused to move and challenged the landlord's illegal actions in court.

A goon squad armed with clubs and dogs then kicked in doors of two of the remaining elderly tenants, Leslie Bencze, 62, and Raymond Brunet, 79, in the middle of the night, and forced them to leave with only the clothes they were wearing. Police refused to intervene saying it was 'a civil matter.' The remaining tenants were locked out of their homes, and some of their personal belongings were either stolen or destroyed.

One of the goons commented later about all the publicity surrounding the eviction: "This is good for my business. People see I don't fuck around - I get the job done."

For more info from the **Friends of MacKay**, contact: [rapidactionmtl@yahoo.fr](mailto:rapidactionmtl@yahoo.fr)

## CRITICAL RESISTANCE EAST

**NEW YORK** - From March 9-11, thousands of prison activists, ex-prisoners, and assorted revolutionaries came together at Columbia University, organizing against the prison-industrial complex. The weekend included seminars on HIV in prison, case studies in organizing at and around several prison in the New York area, mandatory minimum sentencing, the death penalty, mass event legal defense, and other topics dealing with the criminal justice system and how to organize against it.

The weekend also included a prisoner art show, several film showings, a telephone hook-up with prisoners in a near-by local jail, and a poetry-music-dance presentation on women of color in prison.

Angela Davis spoke at the multimedia event Saturday night where she summarized the increase in anti-prison organizing since the 1999 Critical Resistance conference in Berkeley, CA.

For more information, visit:  
<http://www.criticalresistance.org>



# Anti-Racists Clash with White Supremacists in Suburban Connecticut

**WALLINGFORD, CT** - With only a week's notice to mobilize opposition to a speaking event by Matt Hale, leader of the white supremacist World Church of the Creator (WCOTC), nearly 300 protesters gathered in Wallingford, CT, on Saturday, March 10th. Although people were unable to completely shut down the event (due to the nearly one hundred police in riot gear blocking the entrances of the venue and protecting the neo-nazis), they did succeed in seriously disrupting it.

A majority of the anti-racist protesters consisted of young anarchists from southern New England who mobilized around a call issued by the Boston-based 'Barricada Collective.' Marching behind a large banner reading "Smash Racism" and accompanied by a number of black flags, the motley crowd arrived at the Wallingford Public Library to find about 40 neo-nazis 'seig heiling' and chanting "white power" at small clusters of passive liberals who held a vigil outside of the event.

The situation quickly escalated into a series of scuffles between anarchists and the more aggressive neo-nazis before the police had a chance to intervene. A few nazis walked away with black eyes and bloodied noses, and several confederate flags and other assorted items of racist regalia were taken and burned. In one amusing incident, a WCOTC supporter had his black sweatshirt pulled over his head

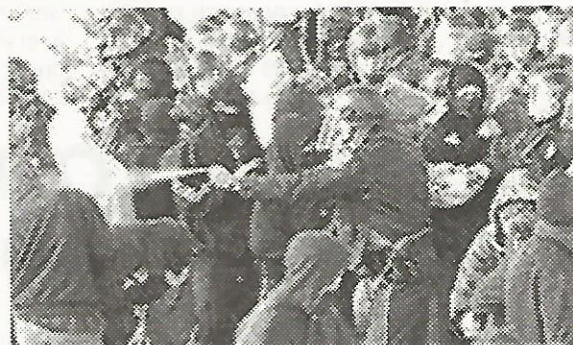
during a melee and was pushed into a group of neo-nazis, where he was mistaken for an anarchist and punched in the face by an exceptionally large skinhead.

Riot police eventually attacked the crowd of anti-racists with pepper-spray and batons, and escorted the WCOTC supporters inside. The doors were blocked off preventing protesters from entering the supposedly public event. An attempt to push past the line of riot police was met by more pepper-spray and batons. After regrouping, it was decided to position clusters of protesters at each of the exits and wait for Hale and his followers to leave.

When Matt Hale finished his talk he was quickly escorted away in a police car, despite the best efforts of one anti-racist who dove onto the hood of the vehicle and smashed the windshield. Hale's supporters, despite being protected by a heavy police presence, did not escape so easily. Renewed clashes broke out, and a hail of rocks, snowballs, and chunks of ice rained down on the cornered group of neo-nazis. More pepper-spray was deployed, and the anti-racists were forced out of the parking lot and into the street. After a tense standoff between anti-racists and riot police that lasted for over an hour, the

remaining protesters dispersed peacefully.

On Saturday, April 21, with many anarchists in Quebec for the protests against the Summit of the Americas, Hale used the opportunity to return to Wallingford for another speaking event. The event was outside this time, and cordoned off to anyone who was not a visible supporter of the WCOTC. Security for the event included police enlisted from nearly every town in the county, including 150 riot police, state troopers, attack dogs, helicopters and a small armored tank. Nearly 200 protesters were on hand. After Hale's twenty minute speech ended (which was drowned out by the sound of helicopters the entire time), the police car chauffeuring him away was attacked, and four people were arrested.



**Riot police protect nazi skinheads from anti-racist militants**

## Inmates Demand Justice in Dartmouth Prison Riot

**DARTMOUTH, MA** - On Sunday, April 15, rioting inmates took one guard hostage for nearly an hour, smashed windows, and climbed onto a roof and pelted other guards with rocks at the Dartmouth House of Corrections. Three guards were injured, none of them seriously, before a special tactical response team were able to storm a courtyard and regain control of the compound.

The riot began when an inmate, armed with a screwdriver, grabbed a guard, dragged him into his cell and tied him to a bunk. A second guard managed to escape. As tempers flared, a number of prisoners clogged toilets, which flooded the cells and caused some machinery to short-circuit and start a small fire. Others broke into the jail woodshop, armed themselves with wooden planks, and used a ladder

to ascend the roof of the prison. Several of the approximately 70 inmates holding the guards hostage demanded to speak to the media, which was denied by prison authorities.

About 50 police officers armed with shields and clubs, and using 10 police attack dogs, took control of an outdoor courtyard. Within minutes, inmates were chased back into their cells by dogs and officers firing beanbag rounds. Police strip-searched all of the roughly 300 prisoners housed in the area of the uprising, and transferred them to other correctional facilities around the state.

The uprising in the medium-security facility came in response to the repressive crack-downs made by the notorious Bristol County Sheriff Thomas Hodgson, who is best known for his controversial reinstatement of the use

of chain gangs three years ago. Smoking, weightlifting, and television have all been banned in the prison, and the number of visits inmates are allowed to receive from friends and relatives have been severely restricted. Overcrowding and a failure to provide adequate medical or dental care (which inmates must pay for out of their own pockets) has been repeatedly criticized by human rights groups. For months, Hodgson confined inmates to their cells for all but one hour a day; in response, they rioted, spat on Hodgson, and smashed toilets.

Conditions at the prison in Dartmouth and the Ash Street Jail in New Bedford - both under Hodgson's supervision - were the subject of a lawsuit in 1998. Lawyers with Massachusetts Correctional Legal Services filed the lawsuit against Hodgson and the State Department of Corrections for "cruel and inhumane" conditions at both jails. Guards also have lodged protests: the Massachusetts Corrections Officers Federated Union has more than 50 complaints pending against Hodgson.



# Bringing the Class War Home - to the Politicians!

**TORONTO** - On Tuesday, June 12, fifty activists from the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty (OCAP) marched on the offices of Minister of Finance Jim Flaherty in a confrontational protest "against the Harris government's continuing and escalating attacks on Natives, poor and working people." Upon arrival, dozens of people forced their way inside of the offices, and proceeded to "evict" the conservative politician from the premises. Filing cabinets and office equipment were overturned, files and papers were strewn along the floor, and furniture was also tossed out into the street.

In speeches during the eviction, OCAP activists explained that "the recent deaths of homeless men and women on the streets of Toronto have been the breaking point, as well as the suicides of three native women in Pikanjikum in the last week. The Harris government's changes to the Child Welfare Act have resulted in a 56% increase in the removal of children from impoverished Indian families". According to OCAP organizer Shawn Brant, "First they legislate our

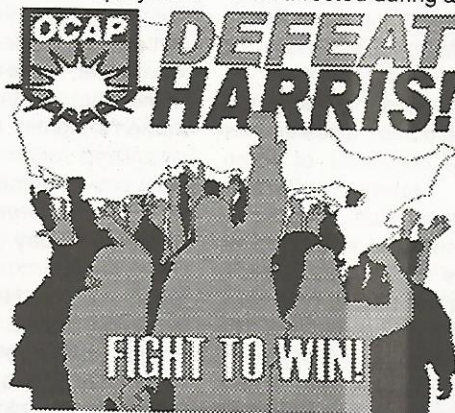
poverty, then they legislate our children away from us." Union activists participating in the eviction cited changes to the Employment Standards Act and other assaults on the rights of workers as the reason for the eviction. High school students who were present cited the government's most recent attack on public education in the form of tax credits for wealthy family to send their children to private schools. A high school student organizer said, "Students are not going to let this government destroy our schools any longer. Youth are constantly being robbed of our dignity by this government, and with this action we're saying its going to stop- now!!"

When police arrived, activists were still throwing objects on to the road (others, who were still inside the office, scribbled "Fuck

Your Corporate Pride" on closet doors and "Fuck Gender" on the door of the women's bathroom). The group scattered, but two were arrested at the scene. The rest boarded their bus, which was later stopped by police. Twelve people were charged with mischief over \$5,000, unlawful assembly and causing a disturbance. A few were also charged with assaulting police and resisting arrest. A few days later, John Clarke (who is often portrayed by the media as OCAP's "outspoken leader") was arrested during a rally and charged for his role in the office eviction-action.

"Jim Flaherty is not fit to govern and we evicted him," said Lana Rabkin, a member of OCAP. "I think it would be a mistake to see today's action as an act of vandalism. Today we say enough and this campaign is going to escalate." Sue Collis, an OCAP organizer, said in a

statement: "Today the Minister of Finance got a small taste of what his government does to families on a daily basis. This action is the first skirmish in what will be an all-out war on this government, a war waged by union locals, native communities, anti-poverty organizations and students."



## Revolutionary Anti-Capitalist Bloc to Disrupt Meeting of International Capitalist Elite

**WASHINGTON, DC** - From October 2-4, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank will hold their bi-annual meetings at the Wardman Park Marriot Hotel in Washington, DC. Both of these institutions exemplify how capitalism promotes poverty, racism, sexism, environ-

mental destruction, and social injustice in the name of so-called development.

Both the IMF and the World Bank are merely the outward faces of a brutal elite bent on imposing its destructive economic regime on the entire planet. We will not be content with reforming, or even abolishing the IMF and World

Bank. We will not be content until every last bank has been burned to the ground, and the last memory of banks has been erased from our world. For only from the ashes of these banks, and of capitalism itself, can arise a new world of liberation, community and harmony. We cannot wait, compromise, or petition for a better tomorrow. We must act now to present an anti-authoritarian alternative.

We call for a large-scale mobilization to descend on Washington to disrupt the IMF and World Bank meetings in solidarity with revolutionary movements throughout the world. We envision a joyous festival of resistance in the spirit of Seattle, Prague, and Quebec City that will bring these meetings to a halt.

### Onward to Washington DC!

Anarchists from the East Coast are currently organizing a tight but diverse revolutionary anti-capitalist bloc to operate in conjunction with the creative action of

autonomous cells to show our force at these meetings. We are calling for a diversity of tactics, and a mutual respect for all. We will succeed by any means necessary.

Cheerleaders of the revolution, artists, brigades of noise and marching bands, blocs of black and red, communications scouts, bike mechanics and messengers, legal collectives, puppetistas - whatever your passion is - we need you. Every victim of police brutality, every abused housewife, every bored teenager, every wage-slave waiting to break their chains, every last precious human being!

There is much to be done in the upcoming months. We need you to help organize meetings, begin caravans, gatherings, and other events to build connections and solidarity within the movement and beyond. Please get in touch!

This is only a draft, please send all correspondence, ideas and input to: [wordsarenote-nough@hotmail.com](mailto:wordsarenote-nough@hotmail.com); or else visit: <http://www.abolishthebank.org>





# Hard Times for Modern Times

## *FBI Probe of "Eco-Terrorists" Targets Long Island Anarchists*

**NEW YORK** - Federal investigators and prosecutors gathered on the steps of a courthouse in Central Islip, Long Island in February to announce that they finally had caught up with the Earth Liberation Front (ELF). The ELF's "campaign of violent crime has stretched from the Pacific Coast to the Rocky Mountains to the Midwest," an FBI official said. "That streak has ended here in New York."

But some observers found the little group of "eco-terrorists" who had been arrested less than impressive. They consisted of three teen-agers - Jared McIntyre, George Mashkow Jr., and Matthew Rammelkamp - who confessed to arson and vandalism of some suburban homes under construction, but had no clear links to any activist organizations. The fourth member of the group, a 19-year-old named Connor Cash, is a well-known local activist. But Cash is a member of the Modern Times Collective, a local anarchist group that has publicly opposed such actions.

Prosecutors say Cash bought gasoline and talked the three into using it to burn four homes - although the U.S. Attorney's office in Central Islip admits they did not mention anyone specific in their pleas. The three minors pled guilty as adults; Cash pled not guilty to arson conspiracy, and aiding and abetting arson - charges that could land him in jail for 40 years, while the others could be imprisoned for up to 20 years each. "The FBI has used these three kids to frame an innocent activist," says Kevin Van Meter, a member of the Modern Times collective.

Far from being a terrorist, Cash has become the focal point in what Modern Times members charge is a pattern of police harassment and "profiling" of activists who have participated in large-scale anti-globalization protests across

the country. They say police and FBI agents have intimidated, surveilled, arrested and offered large bribes to Modern Times members.

Always a hard place for the left to organize, Long Island nevertheless has become the home of a lively, youth-oriented anarchist scene in recent years. Much of its energy is centered on Modern Times, which publishes a newspaper, holds conferences and educational meetings on issues like globalization and women's rights, and is trying to open an organizing center. Cash is one of this group's most active members. A high school dropout, he is now an organizer working with migrant workers and day laborers who have been the target of local hostility, and even beatings, in recent months. He was instrumental in opening Long Island chapters of the Food Not Bombs hunger relief program.

Modern Times dates its troubles to May 6, 2000, when it held an unpermitted street festival in the town of Huntington. The action took over Huntington's main thoroughfare to protest globalization, the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, and lack of space for youth on Long Island, where kids have little more than parking lots to hang out in for entertainment. The 90 protesters held a drum circle, handed out newspapers and threw up a 28-foot tripod—which Cash climbed, preventing it from being removed. Befuddled police, who had never seen anything like this in their town, arrested Cash and 15 others. Thirteen, including Cash, were sentenced to 10 hours of community service.

Then on August 1, Modern Times participated in a street blockade at the Republican National Convention in Philadelphia. Cash and 50 others were arrested. Soon afterward, Cash and other Modern Times members

found FBI agents turning to them for leads in their investigation of ELF-inspired arsons on Long Island—despite the fact that Modern Times has not been active in campaigning against urban sprawl, which was the apparent motive behind the burnings.

Cash was one of several group members who were threatened with retaliation if they did not help the agents, according to Van Meter and two witnesses. Officials at the U.S. Attorney's office decline to comment on case specifics.

Modern Times responded with a long statement in its newspaper in early February, charging that the ELF investigation was actually something more sinister. "The FBI was not just interested in intimidating and investigating those involved in the ELF, but 'fishing' into the activities of youth community activists," it said.

The statement also strongly opposed ELF's tactics: "Creating an environment of fear and intimidation by means of arson is not conducive to the development of an empowered community. Furthermore arson puts at risk the lives of volunteer firefighters and innocent community members who are not profiting from urban sprawl."

As a member of the Modern Times collective, Cash consented to this viewpoint. Just days after the statement appeared, however, he was arrested. His family had to put up their house to free him on \$250,000 bail, and he has had trouble finding work as he awaits trial, which is expected to come up before the end of the year.

However, the publicity around Cash's case has helped rally support for Modern Times. Van Meter reports that the collective is planning local protests against the IMF and World Bank, and hopes to open its organizing center and a radical, youth-run school within the next year.

## Philly ABCF Initiates New Queer Caucus

**PHILADELPHIA** - A new radical queer caucus is forming and welcomes involvement from queer people of all kinds (gays, lesbians, bisexuals, transnians, queens, and kings, etc.). This caucus is part of the Anarchist Black Cross Federation (ABCF), and will focus on creating a larger space and louder voice for radical queers within the activist community. We feel that it is necessary to show a radical queer presence in the activist movement.

We hope to create a support network for HIV+ prisoners and queers in jail, to continue to support political prisoners and prisoners of war, and build solidarity between the queer liberation

struggle and the movements they came from.

We plan on bringing radical issues back into the queer rights movement, and to bring queer issues into the forefront of the movement for social justice, and to build solidarity with other oppressed groups.

We intend on reclaiming a place for radical queers in the movements for social justice. We are tired of being marginalized by white middle to upper class liberals who constantly fall back on the Democratic Party, as if they were an ally to queer liberation. We do not see the right to same sex marriage as the ultimate goal for queer liberation. We will not be fooled

by advertising campaigns covered in rainbow stickers. We will not allow ourselves to be assimilated into the corporate culture of American waste, greed, and exploitation. And we most certainly will not turn a blind eye as our brothers and sisters are dying in the prison industrial gulag, and queers are constantly being attacked on the streets by bigots and fascist cops.

If you are interested in working with us, you can subscribe to our listserve at: [queerabc-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:queerabc-subscribe@yahoogroups.com) or contact us at:

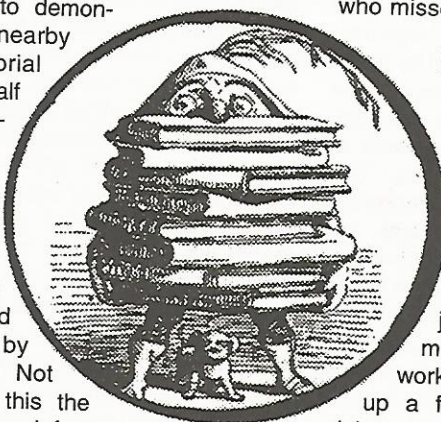
**ABCF Queer Caucus, 4722 Baltimore Ave., Philadelphia, PA 19143**  
email: [queerabc@yahoo.com](mailto:queerabc@yahoo.com).



# Northeast Anarchists Celebrate Another Year of Bookfairs in the Region

## Mid-Atlantic Anarchist Bookfair

The Second Annual Mid-Atlantic Anarchist Book Fair was held in Baltimore, Maryland on May 12th. This year the sponsors provided a full day's and evening's worth of events, with speakers and workshops from noon until 6pm, followed by a concert featuring a half a dozen different bands. There was even time for a little class struggle when many of the participants took off to demonstrate at the nearby Union Memorial hospital on behalf of striking workers at the Up-To-Date Laundry, which has the contract to clean the hospital's linens. Tasty vegetarian food was provided by Baltimore Food Not Bombs, making this the most entertaining, informative,



militant, delicious and nutritious bookfair yet.

Over two dozen different organizations were represented, and, with a dozen speakers and workshops spread over six hours, there was more than any one person could have hoped to do. A few hundred people turned out over the afternoon to participate in discussions ranging from anarchism and intentional living to labor organizing, from social ecology to dialectical hedonism and the art of Tango. Our thanks to all the participants and for those who missed it: there's always next year!

## Montreal Book and Freedom Fair

Up to a thousand anarchists and radicals from Montreal, Quebec, Ontario, and the Northeast region gathered on May 19th for Montreal's second anarchist bookfair. The event was judged to be a complete success by most who attended. Through many workshops, people learned how to set up a functioning pirate radio stations, debated the best ways of avoiding police infil-

tration, learned about the history of the anarchist movement and discovered the various ways anarchists have influenced art. DJs entertained the crowd and a free supper was cooked and served by the People's Potato. Two benefit gigs happened during the night afterward.

1710 Beaudry was decorated in red and black banners inside as well as outside, making the anarchists visible to the entire neighbourhood. People of all ages and walks of life attended the event, which is likely to become a mainstay of Montreal's radical community, offering glimpses into the world they want to create.

## New England Anarchist Bookfair

For two years, anarchists from Boston have successfully hosted the New England Anarchist Bookfair. This year, Amherst, Massachusetts (two hours west of Boston) will have the dubious honor of hosting the event, which will take place in mid-October, and be co-organized by the Boston-based Sabate Anarchist Collective and anarchists from Western Massachusetts. For more information, contact: [anarchobook@yahoo.com](mailto:anarchobook@yahoo.com)

# Day of Police Harassment Ends in Riot

**MONTREAL** - Rainy weather before Quebec's national(ist) St-Jean Baptiste holiday did not prevent thousands of people from enjoying festivities in their own way on Monday, June 25th. While an officially sanctioned concert attracted some 150,000 people, other street parties took place in Montreal. Most unofficial and spontaneous among them was a gathering on the flanks of Mount-Royal Park. The police were there in provocatively large numbers, and, as expected a small riot broke out late in the night.

Throughout the day police harassed street youth, and by nightfall began systematic search and seizures. While the St-Jean festivities don't draw a lot of anarchist or activist-types, the gross abuse of basic rights and freedoms was met with considerable resistance, anger and popular indignation. By midnight, more people arrived in Mount Royal Park, and the police began to lose the upper hand when a few small camp fires were started and a couple of smoke bombs went off.

Firefighters were called in and cautiously put out the small fires. A stand off began with several hundred jeering people on higher ground, and lines of cops a short distance across the park lawn. Fairly suddenly, the police all but vanished from sight and the atmosphere relaxed a bit as the stand off dissipated.

Perhaps knowing that the cops were planning to return with overwhelming force, people began leaving the park. They moved into Park Avenue, an urban highway cutting through the park, moving towards the commercial section of the avenue. Traffic was disrupted and a busload full of riot cops was greeted with a Molotov cocktail. At the corner of the park, the McDonald's quickly fell victim to popular attack with nearly all of its fifteen windows smashed out and a Molotov cocktail lobbed inside (the fire was quickly put out by the fire brigade). From here a crowd of people attacked the Petro-Canada gas station but were pushed back by lines of riot police. Many people dispersed northward up Park Ave., leaving a trail

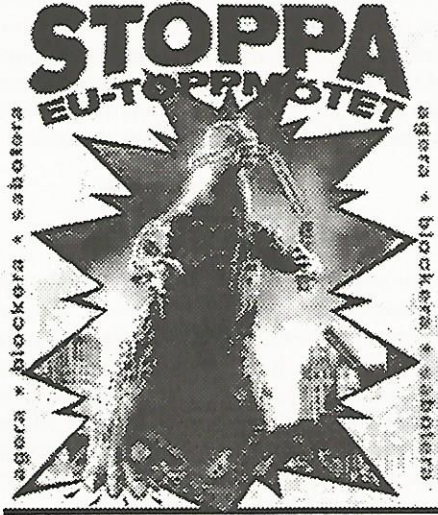
of property destruction in their wake (targets included corporate property, a government liquor store, and an X-rated video shop). Twenty-eight people were arrested by morning.

St-Jean riots have in the last couple of years been fairly minor. They are in marked contrast to some of the large scale ones seen in the 1990s in Quebec City and in Montreal. As with hockey riots and more explicitly political forms of mass direct action, there appears to be a cycle to these happenings. With each riot and each police intervention, people learn more, and it could be supposed that here as in other places, a certain body of experience in rioting may be taking shape. In regions with more severe political and economic/class conflicts, or with traditions of combativeness forged by war and occupation, this understanding is quite developed and sharper in its expression. With the globalization of capitalism and its attendant misery, we may also see the spread of this type of spontaneous popular revolt.



# Extreme Repression of Anti-Capitalists at EU Summit

**SWEDEN** - For the first six months of this year, Sweden acted as head of the European Union (EU). This period culminated in a summit of EU leaders in Gothenburg, Sweden's second biggest city, on June 14th-16th. As throngs of politicians, lobbyists, and journalists from all over the world converged on the city; so did thousands of protesters opposing EU economic and political decisions.



The EU is an organization that unites its member nations into a single political and economic entity. Anti-capitalists and anti-authoritarians throughout Europe view this body as the embodiment of neo-liberal economic and state policies. It seeks to privatize public services and further commodify the environment of Europe, increase militarization of the continent, and create racist immigration policies and a "Fortress Europe." Because of its role in furthering the "globalization" of capitalism, eroding of the rights of workers and individuals, and furthering authoritarianism; meetings of this body are met with fierce opposition by activists throughout Europe. Out of fear of militant opposition, Swedish authorities built a perimeter not unlike the one used in Quebec around the summit site which consisted of a ten foot high metal barrier and promised that militant protest would be met with extreme action. However, no one expected the extremes that would materialize during this summit.

The protests began on Thursday, June 14th, the date of a scheduled meeting between George W. Bush and EU leaders. Approximately 12,000 people marched in an official protest through the city's center against this meeting and a variety of US policies ranging from the United States' use of

the death penalty to expansion of NATO and the development of a "Star Wars" missile defense system to neo-liberal economic policies and globalization.

Police attacked protesters gathered in a park several yards from the demo site who fought back with cobblestones and metal street signs. The most severe police repression of the day came at a school which was supposed to serve as the convergence space for protesters. At about 10am police surrounded the school under the pretense that those gathered inside were suspected of possessing weapons designed to disrupt the summit. The area was circled by a barrier of fifty cargo containers with a small opening intended for police use to attack the building and arrest those inside. At least 240 people were arrested. Those who chose to resist police repression or tried to escape were met with violence. This extreme level of repression was only a prelude to what would occur in the following days.

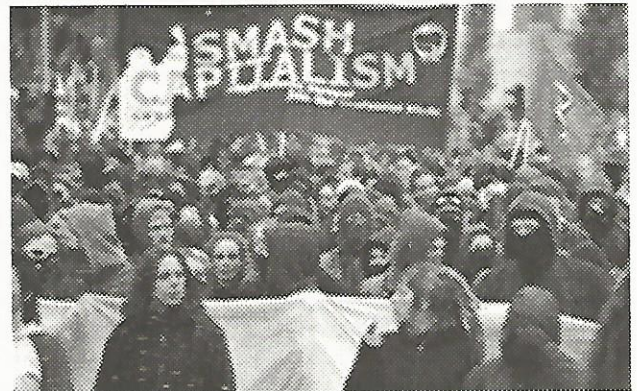
Friday, June 15th brought a new round of protests and state repression. While a White Overalls march to the EU summit to confront the so-called delegates was canceled because of padding, helmets, and shields being confiscated, "red bloc" militants (including a black bloc of about 700 people) began to gather nonetheless. When this group began to move toward the EU summit, police responded by charging them with clubs drawn and on horseback. The demonstrators defended themselves with cobblestones and bottles, at times overtaking the police. It was reported that several police were thrown off of horses and that some police vehicles were destroyed. Barricades were created in the streets to protect the protesters from police attacks and corporate businesses were destroyed, looted, or otherwise vandalized by angry protesters. The battle ended as protesters prepared to join a larger rally later in the day.

That evening 25,000 demonstrators marched toward the EU summit, but were stopped short by police. The protest disbursed and many headed for a Reclaim the City street party. It was here that police repression took a bloody turn. When the cops attempted to break up the gathering, activists responded with the same militancy they had shown earlier in the day. At this point, at least fifteen rounds of live ammunition were

fired into the crowd hitting three protestors. One, Hannes Westberg, was shot in the abdomen and has received extensive damage to his liver, spleen, and kidneys. While he is in stable condition, it is uncertain whether or not he will survive. This began the final stage of a campaign of terror which lasted into the following day.

At the Shillerska School convergence center, masked police carrying semi-automatic rifles with laser sights forced a group of 200-300 unarmed people to lay on the ground for over an hour. A bus of anarcho-syndicalists preparing to return to Germany was raided by police who beat people into compliance. Smaller demos on Sunday were met with similar repression.

What was the final outcome? At least 600 protesters were arrested during the summit and three were shot, with one still clinging to life. But the state did not succeed in limiting protest against the EU and US. Protestors forced EU ministers to move a gala dinner from an outside location into their fortress and four delegations had to flee their hotels due to the rioting. The economic costs of both the police operation and the attacks on corporate property once again raise the stakes of holding such meetings and have put doubts into the minds of future summit hosts about the feasibility of having the meetings in their city/country. The Italian prime minister, Silvio Berlusconi, has vowed to virtually shut down



**Anti-capitalist demonstrators in Gothenburg**

Genoa for the meeting of the G8 nations in July for fear of militant anti-capitalist protesters. It is clear that militant protest foregoes the possibility for "leaders" to hold a major summit without the threat of mass disruption. The true nature of the state becomes more apparent as it works harder and harder to repress dissent and ensure its security.



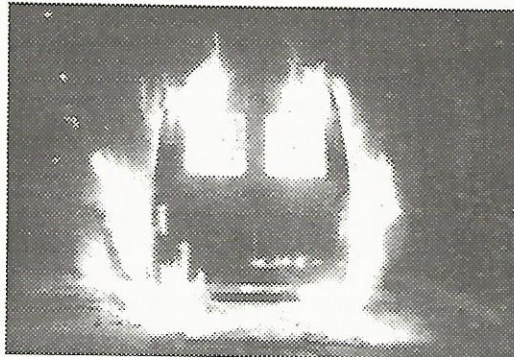
# Asian Youth Riot Against Fascism

**ENGLAND** -- The Asian youth of Oldham (just outside of Manchester), responded to months of provocation by neo-fascist groups marching in their community with three days of rioting. Molotov cocktails were thrown at riot police throughout Saturday, May 26, and fighting continued over the next two nights. Many are pointing to the media reporting of alleged no-go areas and police handling of racist attacks as the underlying tension.

In the weeks leading up to the Oldham Riot, the neo-fascist National Front (NF) had been trying to capitalize on an attack on an old white pensioner which the local police had described as a 'racial attack' despite the victim and his family saying this was not true. The NF tried, not very successfully, to organize provocative marches while the British National Party (BNP) hoped to capitalize on the street activity through the electoral activity of their leader, Nick Griffin, in the local constituency.

While the NF and BNP were able to do what they wanted, anti-fascists leafleting in opposition to the electoral campaign has been constantly harassed by the police. As for the

local Asian community - they were informed by police (which the police now deny) that they should stay out of the center of town during the NF march days.



**Police van torched during riots in Oldham**

Amidst the rising tension, members of the NF and Combat 18 (a nazi skinhead organization) were bussed into Oldham for a planned march on Saturday. In the evening, racist attacks took place against an Asian family's house in town, and two carloads of fascists smashed in the windows of a local take-out restaurant and attacked a car with a pregnant

Asian woman inside. The police are in full force only five streets away where Asian youth have gathered, yet fail to turn up when called by terrified victims of racist attacks. They eventually arrive as local people gather and arrest Asian men - some who are, apparently, still being held days later.

Local youths, angry at hearing of police response gathered and attacked the Live and Let Live Pub (where NF supporters had been allowed to drink earlier in the day) with bricks, bottles and a Molotov cocktail. As police moved in, cars were torched as barricades and a street battle raged on.

At about 1am, running battles between protesters and police escalated on the streets of Glodwick. The youth responded to riot cops, dogs and tear gas with Molotov cocktails, fireworks and bricks. While the rioters' violence is widely reported there is absolute silence about the level of police violence. As usual, victims of police violence have no recourse, as they are afraid of being arrested for participating in the riots. CCTV cameras are targeted - some burnt down. Police tactics of driving their vans into crowds gathered in the street backfired under a hail of Molotov cocktails, leaving one van ablaze. Police manage to "restore order" by Sunday morning, however actions continued into Monday night when the offices of the Oldham Chronicle were firebombed.

## With Dynamite and Molotovs, Workers Occupy State Buildings

**BOLIVIA** - On July 2, approximately a thousand Bolivian workers, along with anarcho-feminist activists from the Mujeres Creando collective, occupied the office of the Superintendent of Banks, demanding relief of personal debt. Those occupying the building represent a movement of approximately 12,000 workers and homeless Bolivians who have borrowed small amounts of money but faced abuse at the hands of the country's financial institutions. For over ninety days thousands of debtors have been demonstrating peacefully in the Bolivian capital of La Paz to demand debt forgiveness.

Once in the interior, the occupiers doused the fourth floor with gasoline, and took 94 hostages. They also threw, from the top floor, dynamite bombs towards the plaza of Isabel the Catholic in order to avoid the approach of the police, who intended to retake the building with plainclothes agents. The staff of the upper hierarchy of the Superintendency was tied to their chairs and several cartridges of dynamite were placed around them to avoid any police

intervention. Right now many of the activists carry dozens of cartridges of dynamite on them, as well as Molotov cocktails and some firearms decommissioned from the guards.

This action followed a tense week in Bolivia, after government troops shot farmers who were blockading a highway in the Bolivian Antiplano, demanding social and economic rights. Bolivia has exploded in protest lately, with farmers, miners, health workers, teachers, students and many other sectors of society vocally stating their rights in the face of harsh and sometimes deadly reaction from the Bolivian government.

For three months, thousands of small debtors have come from all of Bolivia to the city of La Paz, where they have become the protagonists of daily protests, initially peaceful but later more radical with actions that have included the burning of banks. These actions have recently become more overtly anti-capitalist, because they do not recognize private property and are beginning to attack wealth directly. There is also a recurrence of direct

action and self-organization.

For continued updates, contact:

**Juventudes Libertarias, Bolivia**

Email: [jjll\\_bolivia@hotmail.com](mailto:jjll_bolivia@hotmail.com)

Web: [www.come.to/jlb](http://www.come.to/jlb)



**Armed with Molotov cocktails, activists demand unconditional debt relief**



# Rebellion Explodes in Cincinnati After Police Murder

**CINCINNATI, OH** - Demonstrations rocked Cincinnati for several days following the fatal police shooting of an unarmed black teenager, touching off rebellion unseen in Cincinnati since 1968, and nationally since the 1992 Los Angeles rebellion.

In the early morning hours of Saturday, April 7, Cincinnati Police Officer Steven Roach chased 19 year-old Timothy Thomas into an alley and shot him at close range in the chest. Thomas had warrants for a variety of misdemeanor charges and



motor vehicle violations, such as not wearing a seatbelt. Roach, 27, claimed he thought he saw Thomas reach for a gun when he opened fire. Doubt assails him, though, as even the Mayor has admitted that the story is improbable. The FBI has opened a preliminary investigation into the case.

Unrest erupted Monday evening following a police news conference concerning the killing and a heated meeting between the City Council and angry residents. Members of the African-American community packed city hall demanding answers and accountability from police. Demonstrators held up proceedings for over three hours, and broke twenty-eight City Hall windows before marching to police headquarters. Riot Police met the angry crowd with tear gas, beanbag rounds and rubber bullets forcing them to disperse, but not before someone managed to put a brick through the station's glass front door. Police arrested ten.

Community reaction escalated Tuesday in the downtown, Over The Rhine and West End sections of the city as thousands, most-

ly young, protesters marched through the streets overturning news racks and breaking windows. Fresh protest began again at dusk, involving broken windows, barricades and a fire set in the Findlay Market. Riot

police moved in, making sixty-six arrests, five of which were juveniles, and ended up hospitalizing twenty-five. Similar demonstrations continued Wednesday night, and police arrested another eighty-two people, including twenty-two juveniles. After three nights of civil unrest, Cincinnati Mayor, Charles Lukens

declared a state of emergency on Thursday. Lukens also announced a citywide curfew, allowing only those going to and from work on the streets between 8pm and 6am.

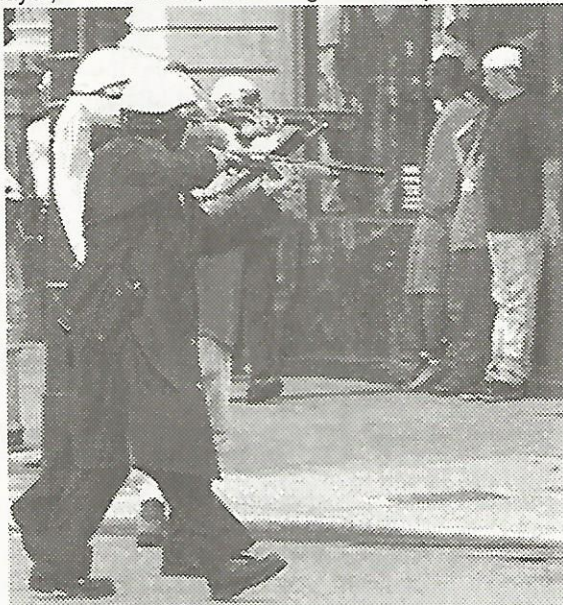
Scuffles between protesters and police broke out again on Saturday after police attacked a procession of mourners following Thomas' funeral. Police drove up on the march suddenly and, without warning, fired beanbag rounds indiscriminately into the crowd injuring several people, including children. Witnesses likened the scene to a drive-by shooting. Police later claimed that they learned from "reliable sources" that protesters would likely become violent sometime Saturday.

The shooting of Timothy Thomas is only the most recent in a series of incidents involving police abuse in Cincinnati. Thomas is the fourth young black man killed by police since November, three of whom were fatally shot, and a fourth died of asphyxiation while in police custody. He is the fifteenth such victim since

1995. In that same time period, zero white suspects had been shot.

A total of 852 people were arrested on riot-related charges and curfew violation throughout the week following Thomas' shooting, 63 have been indicted by the Hamilton County grand jury.

Demonstrations in solidarity with the victimized classes of Cincinnati continue in the city, the largest being a two-thousand-strong march on Saturday, June 2, demanding an end to police violence and amnesty for those arrested during the rebellion. The protest drew people from across the Midwest and Northeast, including a 200 person anti-



**White cops with guns restore "law and order" in Cincinnati**

authoritarian bloc organized by Anti-Racist Action (most made the tactical decision to not dress in all black in order to blend in more with the entire demonstration, be more inviting to the rebellious youth of the community, and not be singled out by the cops who had indicated that they were watching out for the "kids in black").

After the march, nearly 100 activists continued on to the Mt. Adams neighborhood, locking down at the intersection of St. Gregory and Hatch. The lockdown symbolized the imposing of a citizens' curfew in the white, upscale neighborhood of Mt. Adams. Police arrested nine people.

## REMEMBER TIMOTHY THOMAS

**Support Those Arrested for a Righteous Rebellion!**  
**We Have a Right to Rebel!**

*Donate to the Bail Fund!*

TTF c/o Kent ABC

PO Box 942

Kent, OH 44240

(checks payable to Kent ABC)

*Donate to the Thomas Family!*

Contributions can be made at any

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account #41590289



# International Meeting of Anarchist Organizations Held in Madrid

**SPAIN** - Over the weekend of March 31st, an international libertarian/anarchist gathering was held in Madrid. It was hosted by the largest anarchist union in the world, the Spanish CGT, which has around 50,000 members. A number of other large libertarian unions attended including the SAC of Sweden and the Italian UNICOBAS.

Also in attendance were a number of smaller libertarian groups including Marmitag (Greece), ORAS-Solidarita (Czech Rep.), Al Badil al Taharouri (Lebanon), CIPO (Mexico), FAG (Brazil), FAU (Uruguay), OSL (Argentina), OSL (Switzerland), CNT (France), No Pasaran (France), Alternative Libertaire (France) and Alternativa Libertaria (Catalunya).

The meeting ended with an agreed declaration. At the time of going to print only a draft version was available (see our web site for the final text). It opens with a definition of what is meant by libertarian.

- *Direct action as a method of struggle*
- *Opposition to capitalism, authoritarianism and all forms of domination.*
- *Using self-management as their internal and external method of operation.*

As might be expected quite a lot of space is taken up with capitalist globalization, its origins and the opposition to it. It warns against those who argue against capitalist globalization but in effect argue for a world government. "Encouraging any type of world government, arising from the current political situa-

tion, will only lead to legitimizing the driving forces of capitalism, accelerating the consolidation of political structures which are totally out of the control of the inhabitants and peoples of the world."

"Neither a State nor a world government, the only government acceptable is the self-management of society from local collectives coordinated regionally and worldwide, ... in which decisions are made from the bottom up and in which federalism is the formula for cooperation. No, to competition and free trade areas. Yes, to mutual aid and solidarity amongst peoples ... ends and means are one and the same in the libertarian strategy. ... at the same time as we fight against and pull down the power of capital we must also construct the libertarian alternative, step by step, minute by minute."

The discussion on revolutionary or anarcho-syndicalism is particularly interesting for its honesty as the largest participating organizations are anarcho-syndicalist. They point out that from the "20th century until the beginning of the Second World War, revolutionary syndicalism and anarcho-syndicalism have been the central point of the major organizational initiatives of anarchist groups and organizations". But that since then changing

conditions mean today "its presence is generally marginal in almost all parts of the planet".

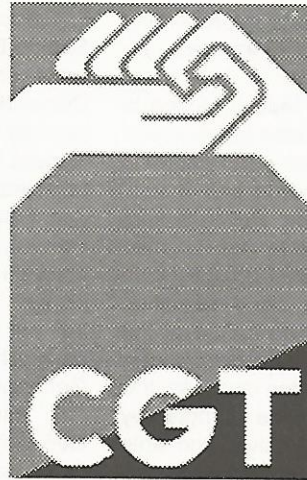
However "all the new social movements re-launched from the 60's onwards, ecology, feminism, anti-militarism, etc. have been a reflowering of libertarian flowers." This leads to the conclusion that "Libertarianism should currently strive towards encouraging convergence, the interaction of social movements - including the workers' movement - in a solid social movement antagonistic to capital and its present true face: economic globalization and all other types of domination. This antagonistic social movement does not have, and

nor should it have, a single organizational expression. It is plural, based on current reality, coming and acting together in the same territory, recreating a common territorial identity, composed of many single identities".

This meeting and document represents a significant step for a section of the anarchist movement. It is a step away from organizing internationally on the basis of ideological purity. While we emphasize the need for

an international organization based on an agreed strategy on core issues and struggles it also makes sense to have a much looser and broader network like that proposed. In any case the meeting represents a step forward in coordinating global libertarian opposition to capitalism.

For the full text of the statement, check:  
[www.cgt.es/jornlib2001/dec1.htm](http://www.cgt.es/jornlib2001/dec1.htm)



## Ugandan Police Search for Student Anarchists

**UGANDA** - Police are looking for students with any anarchist connections on both Makerere University campus and surrounding areas. Computer files and any leftwing material have also been confiscated from the student's halls.

The government attack on the anarchists in Uganda came as a result of an incident where a Makerere University student was shot dead by unknown gunmen on February 3rd, sparking off riots and a running battle with police for over eight hours.

The violent confrontations began when students marched to Bwaise, pulling down Museveni's (the military dictator) campaign posters and hitting government vehicles with sticks and stones. The march proceed-

ed to the city mortuary at Mulago, to demand the body of the deceased. They also destroyed property and smashed glass windows at the Medical School, where they interrupted exams. Later, they grabbed a coffin from a roadside carpentry shop in Wandegaya and marched towards parliament, where they destroyed government vehicles. After failing to find Francis Ayume, the House Speaker, at the parliamentary buildings, the students went to the Ministry of Education headquarters, where they also vandalized a government Landrover and a police pick-up truck.

The police, using tear gas canisters and rubber bullets, dispersed the students from the ministry premises and confiscated the

empty coffin. The battlefield was transferred to the Wandegaya junction, where the students blocked traffic and lit bonfires on the highway. A stone-throwing brawl ensued when the police fired tear gas canisters directly at students occupying the CCE hall, and one of the canisters landed on a mattress, which caught on fire and burned the property inside of two rooms. The angry students continued engaging the police in a battle by pelting them with stones and slingshots.

At least four students were injured during the battle, and twenty people are still being held by police (some brutality and instances of sexual abuse by the police have been reported in the jails).



# Revolutionary Cells Trial Begins in Berlin



**GERMANY** - In December of last year, the trial again RZ-member-turned-informant Tarek Mousli ended in Berlin. Charged with membership in the Revolutionary Cells (RZ), he was, as expected, given a suspended sentence in return for his extensive ratting to police and German federal authorities, testimony which he gave the state unprecedented insight into the make-up of Germany's radical/revolutionary left.

The 41-year-old Tarek Mousli moved to Berlin from Kiel in 1981. He was active in various left-radical projects in the city. According to his own confession, he came into contact with the armed organization Revolutionary Cells (RZ) in 1985, and was an active member until 1989. After 1989, according to Tarek's testimony, he took on a "passive" function, storing explosives on behalf of the RZ in his cellar. Having since "started a new life for himself", Tarek's situation changed dramatically when a group of youths stumbled by chance onto his cache of explosives and stole some for themselves. This set the police and federal agents on his tail. After months of observation, authorities finally arrested Tarek Mousli in May 1999 and charged him with supporting the RZ.

Four months later, though still a free man, the charges were changed to membership in the RZ, and Tarek was alleged to have been a leading member of the organization. Charged also with possession of explosives and concrete participation in several armed RZ attacks, Tarek responded by giving the authorities volumes of willing testimony.

Before Tarek's confessions, German federal police admitted that the only information they had on the internal workings of the RZ network came from information taken from the files of the former East German Stasi secret police. Now they claim to know by name all the militants of the RZ (except for one).

Because of Tarek's ratting to the police, Sabine E., Axel H., Harald G., and Rudolf S. were arrested in Berlin and Frankfurt in December 1999 (Rudolf S. was already in custody due to confessions by another state witness, Hans-Joachim Klein). Matthias was arrested in Berlin in April 2000. Another person, Lothar E., was detained by authorities in Canada on a warrant issued after Tarek's testimony to authorities (Lothar is presently free on bail. It is expected that Canadian authorities will issue a ruling in the summer of 2001 on whether or not he should be deported to Germany to stand trial).

Tarek's testimony is admissible under Germany's repressive 'Kronzeugenregelung' (state witness law) statute, which has since expired. Trials based on this law have nothing to do with normal rules of law. In such trials, testimony by state witnesses is generally admitted as fact. In return for being a rat, Tarek will now receive a new identity from the German state, free rent and telephone, and 2,400 German marks per month payment.

The trial again Axel, Harald, Matthias, and Sabine started on March 22, 2001, and after being postponed twice, is expected to continue throughout the year.

## Anarchists Visited by FBI Searching for BLA Soldier

**UNITED STATES** - Over the last year, several activists with the Anarchist Black Cross Federation (ABCF) have received visits from the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation. The most recent of these occurred in late February, in Jacksonville, Florida, when the landlord of ABCF activists was questioned by FBI operatives. The FBI is in the middle of a manhunt for Black Liberation Army combatant Azikikwe Onipedo, accused of shooting at a police officer in Neptune, New Jersey.

The Anarchist Black Cross Federation, in building its support and freedom programs for Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War, dialogues and works actively with PP/POWs, including many former Black Panthers and BLA soldiers. It's presumed that this activity is what has drawn FBI harassment and surveillance.

The FBI has a long history of harassing and intimidating activists. These sorts of FBI activities should be exposed by all revolutionaries, and all should be aware.

Advice from the Center for Constitutional Rights can be found at:  
[www.cwu.edu/~millerj/jack/rights.html](http://www.cwu.edu/~millerj/jack/rights.html)  
 Know your rights.

For more information on the work of the Anarchist Black Cross Federation, contact ABCF via its website at: [www.abcf.net](http://www.abcf.net); e-mail at: [info@abcf.net](mailto:info@abcf.net); or call toll-free in the U.S. at: 1-877-852-9500 ext. 332.

# Vrankrijk Squat Under Threat of Eviction

**NETHERLANDS** - After two years of threats by the City Council, on March 27th, the mayor of Amsterdam finally got the political backing to apply "administrative force" against the Vrankrijk squat. This means that Vrankrijk can be closed down by the police and the authorities at any moment. The Amsterdam authorities have repeatedly tried to criminalize and de-politicize the Vrankrijk volunteers and sympathizers. Most recently after the eviction of the Kalenderpanden and earlier in reaction to protests during the Euro-summit.

Vrankrijk is an independent and autonomous squat bar that has existed for 18 years, and is run on a voluntary basis. Collectively we take responsibility for Vrankrijk, so people can have a good time and are safe for, for example, fire-hazards as well. Vrankrijk respects everyone for whoever or whatever they are, not for what their financial status or position is. The underlying goal is not to just be an alternative, but also to support numerous groups and people who try to make an effort for a just society based on solidarity and autonomy.

They will try to close down Vrankrijk by evicting and then boarding up the place. We can and will re-squat the place immediately. (the building is owned by former squatters who are sympathetic). This means we have the opportunity to continue the fight for this place even after the first, second or third eviction. We do need support from as many people as possible to be able to do this. We call on everyone to resist in any way possible. To put pressure on the city of Amsterdam to stop there attempts to close down this independent and autonomous place. Stop the eviction! For autonomy and solidarity!

For updates, check Vrankrijk's website at:  
<http://www.vrankrijk.org>;  
 or email: [info@vrankrijk.org](mailto:info@vrankrijk.org)



# Daewoo Collapses to Global Capital

**SOUTH KOREA** - The collapse of Daewoo shows just what happens when a big national capital falls into the hands of global capital. Some commented that the fall of Daewoo was inevitable, some welcomed the collapse as a successful result of restructuring - one less company to share the market with. But the fall of Daewoo had enormous consequences for workers.

On November 8th, Daewoo announced that, along with declaration of bankruptcy, they would cut 3,500 jobs. Tens of thousands of workers fought hard all through November, fighting to protect their rights, condemning the corrupt management which eventually brought the company down and denouncing the neo-liberal economic restructuring of the Kim Dae-Jung government. Unfortunately, on November 27th, the Daewoo union gave into the threats that all workers will end up jobless if the union does not accept the cuts, and signed an agreement to form a joint committee with the management.

As usual, union capitulation got the workers nowhere and in early February management announced that it would lay off close to 2000 workers. The Daewoo union retaliated, immediately going on strike, and the government intervened by sending riot police to break up the strike.

The brutality of the riot police brought out once again the essence of the Kim government, who came into power with sweet advertisements of democracy, as he shattered all hopes and immediately started his neo-liberal regime. Workers at Daewoo, family members of layed off workers, trade unionists from the affil-

iates Korean Federation of Metal Workers and the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions, students, and social movement activists have been involved in the struggle against layoffs and the attack by police for the same period.

This current struggle is perhaps the most intense and violent show of resistance on the part of the Korean working class for quite some time. Molotov cocktails have reappeared (on numerous occasions) for the first time since the Seoul Subway union strike of '99.

The Joint Struggle Committee Against Daewoo Motors, comprised of various social and people's organizations, has been formed to coordinate and organize support for the struggle. It has been actively involved in organizing the demonstrations and counteracting the government's oppressive measures, while also propagating the struggle both nationally and internationally. The KCTU, of which the Daewoo Motors Trade Union is a part of, has rightfully declared this struggle a struggle for the entire working class, and has taken measures to target not just the management of Daewoo Motors, but the neo-liberal restructuring plan of the government as well.

Perhaps it is too early for an evaluation of this struggle but several points are clear at this point, even as the struggle continues. The struggle has successful in again laying bare the brutal anti-working class and anti-people stance of the Kim Dae-Jung government.

Suppression of basic civil rights have been denied the workers by the police.

Everywhere you turn in this country there are struggles against the neo-liberalism. While the Daewoo struggle may be the most high profile, workers are also in the midst of bitter battles at Readymix Concrete, Korea Telecom, at three separate insurance companies and in the health sector. Even casual workers, whose numbers in 1999 hit 50% of the total workforce, are fighting back, demanding permanency. Students are cam-



*Korean students extend warm solidarity to strikers*

paing against rising tuition fees and farmers are organizing against the opening of the country's agricultural markets.

For the regime this movement is like the hydra, whose heads kept growing back. Just when one struggle has been repressed, up rises another, then another. The alternatives facing South Korea's working people are now sharply revealed. In a fully industrialized country with neither a welfare system to speak of nor any remnants of pre-capitalist society in which to find some refuge, South Korean workers have been backed up against an unscalable wall. They have no alternative but to fight.

## Anti-Privatization Protests Lead to Rioting in Papua New Guinea

**PAPUA NEW GUINEA** - On Tuesday, June 26, three university students were killed and 17 people were wounded when police opened fire on riots sparked by a six-day anti-privatization protest. Numerous businesses had their windows smashed in and were looted, and the police barracks was burnt to the ground. The government district of the city looked like a battleground, with streets strewn with rocks and overturned cars.

The rioting followed a five-day peaceful sit-in by up to 3000 University of Papua New Guinea students, workers and the unem-

played outside Sir Mekere's office at Waigani (about 5 miles from central Port Moresby). The students were calling for an end to interference from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in the country's economic restructuring. In particular, they demanded an end to privatization of public assets. After handing in a petition for the prime minister, the crowd of 3,000 dwindled to about 150 on Monday night. Police closed in and gave the order to disperse. When they refused, tear gas was used and shotguns and automatic weapons fired over their

heads, killing the three students in the cross-fire. By first light, news of the shootings had spread and people streamed to Waigani, looting, burning and stoning as they went.

Opposition to economic reforms in the former Australian colony has stiffened since soldiers, fearing the armed forces would be slashed, staged a 12-day mutiny in March. Trade unions, which were not part of the student protest but are opposed to privatization, called for the Prime Minister to step down and threatened to close ports and disrupt power supplies.



# REVOLUTIONARY MAYDAY

## International Day of Resistance to Capitalism

*May Day has been traditionally celebrated as a day of working class solidarity and revolutionary struggle. Today it inspires a new wave of resistance against global capitalism, with hundreds of thousands taking to the streets around the world...*

### AUSTRALIA

Thousands of protesters fought with police in cities across Australia, blockading stock exchange buildings, offices and city streets. In Sydney, mounted police conducted provocative attacks on 2,000 anarchists, environmentalists and anti-globalization protestors who blockaded the stock exchange and burned effigies of politicians. Police also clashed with protesters picketing an immigration detention center. At least 30 police were injured, two seriously, and dozens of protesters were arrested throughout the day.

Smaller blockades took place at the stock exchanges in Melbourne and four other cities, with 30 protesters arrested when they tried to force their way inside of the stock exchange in Brisbane. In Perth, police on horseback charged and broke up groups of protesters who were blocking the streets. In Canberra about 200 activists managed to close the headquarters of Australia's mining industry, after blockading the front and rear of the building. A separate trade union march in Melbourne drew some 10,000 workers.

### UNITED STATES

In Indiana, workers at JeffBoat, the United States' largest inland shipyard, staged a wild-cat strike for Mayday. JeffBoat rejected a contract made by the union without the members' consent. Several JeffBoat workers refused to enter the shipyard and started an unsanctioned picket line. Other workers joined in and by lunchtime there was a total walkout at JeffBoat shipyard. By the following day, the picket lines had grown much stronger and some workers broke off to form a moving barricade at the main gate. The police and the

sheriff were called out but refused to take action against the workers.

In Pittsburg, over 200 people marched through the streets in protest of global capitalism, bringing traffic to a standstill. Unprovoked, police attacked the demonstration with pepper spray and batons. Ten people were arrested, some held for several days, and charged with obstructing a highway and disorderly conduct. Two people received felony charges.

In California, a few hundred demonstrators clashed with police in Long Beach after being surrounded and attacked for "failure to disperse". Police in riot gear used batons against people, and opened fire with bean bag rounds and rubber bullets, and protesters retaliated with rocks, slingshots and bottles. Over a hundred people were arrested.

Large demonstrations also took place in Chicago, New York City, San Francisco, Boston, Portland, Providence, Houston, and Seattle.



### ENGLAND

In London, several thousand participated in anti-capitalist demonstrations organized loosely around the theme of "May Day Monopoly", with small rallies taking place at several London sites featured in the board game. They were met by over 6,000 police. The protests, organized by a variety of anti-globalization, anarchist and

environmentalist groups, were largely peaceful throughout the day until riot police attempted to corral people in and make arrests when they reached Oxford Street (one of the city's major shopping areas). As people were violently forced back by police, a counter-charge was attempted. Dozens of rocks, bottles, and pieces of debris rained down on the police lines who responded with tear gas and batons.

Meanwhile, a group of 600 to 1,000 people slipped around the police lines to the north side of Oxford Circus. The group was led by around 40 "Wombles" (protesters dressed in white overalls and padding). On Holles Street, protesters broke through police lines to join up with another group of demonstrators.

In response to the repression and violent

provocation of the police, groups of anarchists broke away from the larger demonstration and touched off a politically motivated rampage of property destruction through the busy and unguarded Tottenham Court Road area. More than 20 banks and multinational corporations had their windows smashed in. By the end of the day, some 91 arrests were made, fifteen people injured, and tens of millions of dollars in security costs were reported.

### GERMANY

In some of the worst Mayday violence in years, riots and street fighting took place in Berlin between demonstrators and over 9,000 police, following an official ban of the annual Autonome Mayday demonstration. As helicopters hovered over the Kreuzberg district, police used water cannons, armored personnel carriers, tear gas, attack dogs and batons against hundreds of anarchists and anti-fascists who were demonstrating under the slogan "Fight Capitalism - Social Revolution Worldwide." Barricades were erected, and police were pelted with rocks, bottles and Molotov cocktails. A number of cars and storefronts were damaged. At least 150 people were arrested, and many demonstrators and police were reportedly injured.

### SOUTH KOREA

In Seoul, 15,000 riot police used batons and water cannons to block a march on government buildings by 20,000 members of the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU) when they stormed a massive police barricade. KCTU-organized rallies and marches took place in most Korean industrial cities, under banners demanding the ousting of President Kim Dae-jung and an end to IMF-directed economic restructuring.

### AROUND THE WORLD

May Day demonstrations also took place in Kenya, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Mozambique, Turkey, Kurdistan, Cambodia, Bangladesh, Iran, Pakistan, Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia, Nepal, Japan, India, Sri Lanka, New Zealand, France, Ireland, Scotland, Switzerland, Sweden, Norway, Netherlands, Austria, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Poland, Greece, Italy, Spain, Russia, Mexico, Cuba, Canada, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Uruguay, and Venezuela.



# Autonome Antifa: More Than Against Nazis!

**GERMANY** - Over the last few years, German mass media and mainstream politicians have downplayed the attacks by Nazis against immigrants, disabled persons, lesbians and gays, and others who wouldn't fit into their fascist worldview. While the police and the German intelligence stayed blind on the right eye, it was antifascist commandos who delivered in clandestine actions, and through infiltrators in the Nazi scene, the research that proved the existence of terrorist Nazi networks.

The party archive of the 'Nationale Front' (NF), which got confiscated in such a clandestine action, copied and given over to a Green Party member of parliament for example documented that this Nazi group was still existant and organizing in the illegality after they were banned by the German interior minister. It resulted in the arrest and conviction of the NF leader Meinolf Schoenborn.

In the streets, autonomist antifascists were the driving force in coalition counter demonstrations against right-wing rallies and under the slogan "Antifa Means Attack!", the only groups (along with immigrant youths) who got engaged in the attack of Nazi rallies. "Kick the Nazis wherever you meet them"-politics made it more difficult for Nazis to occupy public space and to form of structures.

Other militant antifascist campaigns included the firebombing of busses of companies, who rented - repeatedly and despite warning - their busses to Nazis, as well as the torching of Nazi property. As of now, the use of firearms and deadly attacks against fascists are ruled out in discussions in the militant antifascist movement in Germany.

Anti-Nazi work became the domain of the autonomist left Antifas. Suddenly, in recent months, the mass media started reporting about Nazi activism and mainstream politicians who were better known for anti-immigrant propaganda tried to present themselves as antifascists, calling for civil courage against Neo-nazis and Racism. What happened? What does it mean if people like Manfred Stolpe who is ruling in the German state of Brandenburg in a coalition with the racist Joerg Schoenbohm and is responsible for the deportation of thousands of refugees? Did they become conscious because Nazis have killed too many people (in a racist climate that they have helped to create)?

Far from it - the reason for this 'State-antifascism' in Germany has little to do with caring about the victims of fascist attacks, but has much more with the caring about Germany's economic interest and it's image in the world. Foreign investors refused to invest in eastern Germany out of security concerns for their employees. Germany's attempt to ensure the international public that the Germans have learned their lesson (in order to bury Germany's fascist history to act freely as a world power) looked through these embarrassing obvious right-wing activities as unbelievable as it is.

The plans to get rid of the problem of the right wing terror and racism by banning Nazi parties and the strengthening of police power (which will be used most likely much more against demonstrations from the left) can't work. Racism is rooted in the middle of the society, and is a problem that goes beyond 60



or 70 Nazi thugs. An effective antifascism has to attack the roots of fascism, roots that are embedded in the capitalist system. In order not to get used by the state propaganda, autonomist antifascists reveal the connection between Nazis and State during every anti-Nazi mobilization. At a recent demonstration to the headquarter of the "National Democratic Party of Germany" (NPD), the march stopped at a deportation prison and the attempt was made to break the prison gates while the racist governmental refugee politics got addressed over the loudspeaker car.

The autonomist left is fighting fascism in the only way possible - the development of a fundamental critique that leads to revolutionary resistance.

For more information, contact:

**Autonome Antifaschistische Gruppe**  
c/o Jermain van Basten  
email: [widerstand98@hotmail.com](mailto:widerstand98@hotmail.com)

## Self Defense is Not a Crime - Justice For Tomek Wilkoszewski!

**POLAND** - Tomek Wilkoszewski is an anti-fascist from Poland who is accused of killing a neo-Nazi skinhead in self-defense after repeated attacks, and sentenced to 15-years imprisonment. It is not even sure that Tomek killed this Nazi, as there was another knife and fight took place in complete darkness. Even he is not sure about that. Despite the facts of his case, he was sentenced in 1996, and his 16 comrades were sentenced for participation. Now everyone of them served their sentences and have

been released. Tomek appealed to a high court, but this appeal was rejected.

Support and help for Tomek and his family is organized both in Poland and abroad. Thanks to the campaign organized by the Anarchist Black Cross and the Polish Anarchist Federation it was possible to collect several thousand zlotys for the help in court. Help from many people resulted in moving Tomek to another prison where he could continue his education. Unfortunately, for the time being Tomek is still in prison. Petitions and

support letters have proved to be of little help. The cancellation trial at the supreme court failed to change the sentence. Now he may only be pardoned by Poland's president.

Please write the president in Tomek's case:

**Prezydent RP**  
**Aleksander Kwasniewski**  
**Krakowskie Przedmiecie 48/50**  
**00-071 Warszawa, Poland**

Also, write a letter to Tomek to show your support:

**Tomek Wilkoszewski**  
**Zakad Karny**  
**Orzechowa 5**  
**98-200 Sieradz, Poland**



# (the) Mechanics for Disrepair:

## Globalization, Capitalism and Some Ideas on What to Do About It

by *Commie00 (Prole Revolt)*

In all of this talk about globalization, you hear some people talking about how capitalism has always been global, and others discussing how global capital is a recent phenomena. They are both right.

Capitalism has had a global presence and been the primary global force for 100's of years, but only within the last 70 years have the people in charge of capitalism (the ruling class) come to be truly "globalized". Now the move is toward the global free-flow of capital. If we are to oppose this, and offer up solutions on what to do about it, we have to first understand what capitalism is to us. It is only from such an understanding can we begin to come up with workable solutions.

### WHAT IS CAPITALISM?

Capitalism is not just an economic system, nor is it just a political system. It is both at once, and more.

#### (1) Class

The first thing we have to understand in order to understand capitalism is class. Class is not an economic category, as we are often led to believe. Class is determined by much more than how much money one makes.

In order to understand class, we have to first understand how we relate to the capitalist system through the work that we do. Does

the work you do produce profit for someone? Do you receive only the equivalent of a small portion (if anything) of what you produce or enable to be produced? If you are a blue or white collar

waged-worker, a student, an unemployed person, a homemaker, an artist, or a farmer the answer is most likely a resounding "YES!"

The second thing we have to understand in order to understand class is our power-relation to capitalism. Do you have the power to hire & fire people? Do you have the power to create and/or enforce laws, start wars, etc.? Do you

have the power to impose wage-slavery? Do you own and control the means of production / reproduction? Do you have any real power over the people who do any of the above? If you are a blue or white collar waged-worker, a student, an unemployed person, a homemaker, an artist, or a farmer the answer is most likely a resounding "NO!"

Answering "yes" to the first question and "no" the second set of questions means that you are working class, a member of what is sometimes called the proletariat. It means that the majority of the fruits of your labor (whether that labor is producing and distributing commodities or reproducing the labor necessary for the production and distribution of commodities) are taken from you in exchange for a fraction (if anything) of what you deserve. It means that you have very little, if any, real social power over the capitalist system.

Opposing the working class is the ruling class. The ruling class are those who receive the majority of the fruits of our labor, those who have the power to hire and fire people, to create and/or enforce laws, start wars, etc., those who own and control the means of production / reproduction, etc. They are corporate CEOs, upper and middle management, politicians, the police forces and agencies, the WTO / IMF / World Bank / TABD / etc., all national governments, and more.

Capitalism is the struggle that rages between these two classes. The notion of middle class is invoked by the ruling class to obscure this struggle, but the middle class is a myth. There has been no middle class for a long time.

However, the working class does not now sit idly by. Through absenteeism, workplace theft, sabotage, strikes, riots, insurrections, grassroots community-building, workplace organizing and movements against sexism, racism, homophobia and the destruction of the environment, and much more, we fight the ruling class.

Capitalism does not change only in response to its own needs. While the capitalist system is changed in minor ways by the competitions of the ruling class, constant working class attacks are the source of capitalism's major changes. The ruling class has to keep reinventing capitalism in response to our attacks. Every change in government (from "democratic" republics, to fascism, to totalitarianism), every change in management forms, every war, etc. is in

some way an attempt to destroy working class power. However, nothing they do can destroy the class struggle (since class is necessary to capitalism), they can only obscure the division, and momentarily weaken us.

It is important to note here that while the ruling class is aware of the class struggle, and wages it willingly, the individuals in that class do not always work well together, have ideological differences, compete with one another, and are sometimes unaware of how what they are doing effects us. As an example: black members of the ruling class from the US probably do not often knowingly perpetuate racism. By being capitalists, however, they must do so because the system is set up to maintain and strengthen cultural (and national) divides.

#### (2) The Market

The basis of the economic aspect of capitalism is the market. The capitalist market (like all markets) is based in exchange, whether this is in the form of exchanging two bushels of corn for a pig, or an ear of corn for \$.25 US.

The market has developed from being based on direct exchange to money-mediated exchange. Money-mediated markets have reached their consummate form in the capitalist market. The capitalist market itself has developed from local "small business" markets into national markets into international corporate markets.

It is through the market that the ruling class creates, maintains and develops its economic power. It takes the fruit of our labor (commodities) jacks the prices up well beyond what it cost them to have us make them, and sells them back to us. That is: we have to give back to them the money they gave us for doing the work just to survive, and, if we're lucky, get a little enjoyment out of our lives.

Now, a common fallacy is that we can return to small-business markets, and that in this way things would be better. This perspective misses two important points: (1) even if it were possible to turn back the clock in this way, it was from this basis that global corporate capitalism grew. Since markets must expand to survive, we would eventually be back to where we are now. And 2) those markets were also based on class division.

The market is the economic arm of capi-





talism, and there is no example in history of a market system that didn't involve a class structure, and the accompanying power and wealth inequalities.

## (3) Money, Wages & Competition

Exchange is an alienating force. Exchange encourages us to view that which we exchange (including ourselves for wages) as an object with an exchange (and now, monetary) value. That is, to view everything in terms of what we can get for it, instead of as something to be used and shared. This puts a distance between us and everything else, and necessarily alienates us from what we produce, what we use, from the planet, and increasingly from one another. With money, this exchange value is expressed though a mediator which alienates us even more.

Money is the economic mediator of commodity exchange, and is itself a commodity - perhaps the most sought after commodity since the more you have of it the more of everything else you can have, including power in the system, and thus over people.

Wages are what we receive in exchange for being enslaved by the system. In order to live we must rely on wages: wages from having a job, wages for being unemployed (welfare), gifts and donations from people with a waged job, etc. Those who do not rely on wages in some way are usually dead or part of the ruling class.

Wage differentials are used by the ruling class as another way of dividing us. The employed are divided from the unemployed, waged parents are divided from their unwaged children, waged spouses are divided from their unwaged spouses, etc. Wage differentials make us compete with one another.

This competition often takes the form of racism, sexism and nationalism. White vs. non-white, men vs. women, Americans vs. Mexicans, etc. It is one of the many ways the ruling class has duped us into fighting amongst ourselves, thus ignoring the real problem: capitalism, and the real enemy: the ruling class.

## Interlude I: Racism, Sexism, Homophobia

So far, we have dealt with these forms of oppression as means of dividing the working class. While this is certainly the root cause of these forms of xenophobia in capitalist society, we do not say it to devalue or homogenize the varieties of exploitation and suffering people are subjected to through these oppres-

sion. Instead, we wish to encourage recognition of the common source of oppression in capitalist society (class exploitation) and suggest that there is a common solution: class solidarity to destroy capitalism.

However, no simple "unite and fight" strategy will enable this. People of color, women and queers deal with specific oppressions that can not be easily understood by white people, men and straight people since they do not share the same experiences. Thus, people of color, women and queers must often organize autonomously within the class to deal with the specifics of their exploitation. White people, men and straight folks have an obligation to respect these autonomies, and learn from their class siblings. It is only through such autonomy that true class solidarity can be built.

In addition to this, racism, sexism and homophobia / heterosexism must be confronted and destroyed by all of us, and it must start with all of us confronting our own prejudices and beginning the process of their destruction in our daily lives.

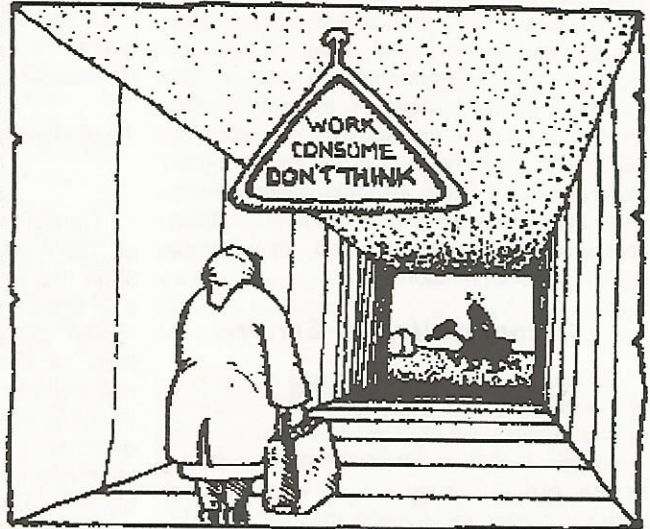
## (4) The State

All class societies have a hierarchical governing structure. For the ruling aristocracy under feudalism, it was the monarchy. For the ruling class under capitalism, it is the state. The state is the collective will and voice of the capitalist ruling class. Thru the illusion of class-neutrality, it enables exploitation. The state came into being as part of the bourgeois revolutions of the 1600 & 1700s, in which the bourgeoisie (who were then the middle class) overthrew and absorbed the aristocracy, and thus became the ruling class.

The state has taken many forms. It is Republican when it is possible to quiet class struggle via the democratic illusion. It is Fascist when the ruling class must use overt violence and force to try to smash working class power. It is Totalitarian when the ruling class consolidates its entire rule in the state mechanism. However, the majority of states are some combination of these three general forms, though they usually lean toward one. Thus the US, the UK, France, etc. are more generally Republican; Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, Spain under Franco, Argentina under Peron, etc. were more generally Fascist; and the Soviet Union, China, North Korea, etc. were/are more generally Totalitarian.

In all forms the ruling class has used

nationalism as a means to divide the international working class. The ruling class encloses areas of state control within imaginary lines (borders), and then uses these borders to try to trick working class people into focusing on some illusory national identity which obscures class struggle by creating false links between the national ruling class and working class. In this way the ruling class confuses our



class, somewhat subverts our global character, gets us to fight amongst ourselves, and even kill one another in their wars.

In the solutions being offered to the problem of globalization, one is the regression to nationalism. The idea being that if we go back to being exploited by a national ruling class, things will somehow be better. In addition to reinforcing capitalism by making use of one of its social relations, this has the effect of restoring the borders within the class. The working class has always been a globalized class in the sense that each member of the working class has more in common with our class siblings world-wide, of all cultures, than we do with those who exploit, oppress, repress, degrade, enslave and insult us.

Another solution has been that we can somehow use the state to our advantage. Not surprisingly, according to both liberals and conservatives should vote for change. Absurd! It amounts to begging the jailers for a nicer jail. They say the state can be reformed (or even that capitalism can be reformed), and use as evidence the relatively minor reforms we've forced the ruling class to give us over the years. However, these reforms exist only as a result of mass protest and direct action, not the ballot box, and usually represent the least radical demands. It also neglects the fact that after these reforms are legally made, they are almost never enforced unless we demand their enforcement as a class. Though, when reforms are enforced, the penalties for the



perpetrators (who are, of course, also ruling class) are usually of the sort that makes it cost effective to continue to break the law.

Another solution being offered is to overthrow the capitalist system and replace it with a different capitalist system. The followers of those who created state-controlled capitalism (Totalitarianism) in Russia, China, etc. suggest that we do the same all over the world. They call this "communism" or "socialism", but in reality it is the opposite of communism / socialism in that it is, well, capitalism. Institutionalized hierarchies are one of the hallmarks of class societies; the state is the institutionalized hierarchical form of control for capitalism. By trying to use the state, re-create the state, or use institutionalized hierarchies in any form we reinforce and strengthen capitalism by legitimizing and (re-)creating capitalist social relations.

## (5) Imperialism & Empire

Originally, the ruling class was also divided into nations. Strong ruling classes engaged one another in imperialist battles for rulership of regions outside of their borders. In the process, they would weaken and absorb smaller local ruling classes. When the strong ruling classes attacked other strong national ruling classes world wars would explode. World War 1 was fought between two allied groupings of national ruling classes. World War 2 was fought between one more tightly allied ruling class grouping and two loosely allied ruling classes. By the time of the Cold War (which could be thought of as World War 3) it was between two ruling classes, both of which were internationalist in character.

With each world war the bloc of allied ruling classes which included the US and the UK became less and less nationally centered and gradually more internationalist in character. This can be seen in their organizational activities. After WW1, the League of Nations (which eventually became the United Nations) was created to draw the national ruling classes together in one collective voice and will, one global state body. After WW2 two more-or-less competing blocs formed based on which type of capitalism they used. On the free-market side they formed NATO, and on the state-controlled side they formed the Warsaw Pact.

On the NATO side the ruling class agreed, at the meeting at Bretton Woods, on the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT), which created the IMF, the World Bank, and (after the fall of the Warsaw Pact) the WTO, the idea being to increase the international flow of capital. This firmly internationalized the ruling class on the NATO side, and begun globalization in earnest. Imperialism, in

a proper sense, ended.

With the fall of the Warsaw Pact, the ruling class in these nations was formally integrated into the international ruling class, and the region was opened to the free-market capitalism of the NATO/GATT side of the world. With the recent formal (soon to be official) inclusion of the remaining state-controlled capitalist countries (China, North Korea, etc.) into this fold, one form of capitalism has come out on top, with the international ruling class as the rulers of a global empire, with no center and no national ruling class on top.

## Interlude II: The Destruction of the Environment

Capitalism is destroying the planet. The capitalist logic of growth dictates that capitalism must consume and expand or die. For this reason "green capitalism" is a myth. The logic of growth and the logic of responsible use are irreconcilable. We must overthrow capitalism and its destructive consumptionism and learn how to use resources responsibly, or we will perish.

This is because we are part of nature. We are materially interdependent with the rest of the planet. One of the most dangerous aspects of class society is that along with its other alienations comes human alienation from the rest of nature. In order to pursue a path of consumption, the ruling class has to blind us (and perhaps itself) to the fact that such consumption makes the environment unable to sustain human life.

## SOME IDEAS ON WHAT TO DO ABOUT CAPITALISM

### Revolution and Reforms vs. Reformism

So basically, in order for us to even begin to be free we must destroy capitalism in its entirety: classes, the market, the state, money, exchange, wage systems, borders, racism, sexism, homophobia and the destruction of the environment all have to go. We can't permanently reform capitalism, and we can't build a different capitalism on the state-controlled / Leninist model.

So how the hell are we supposed to do this? And what do we do until this glorious day when capitalism is smashed?

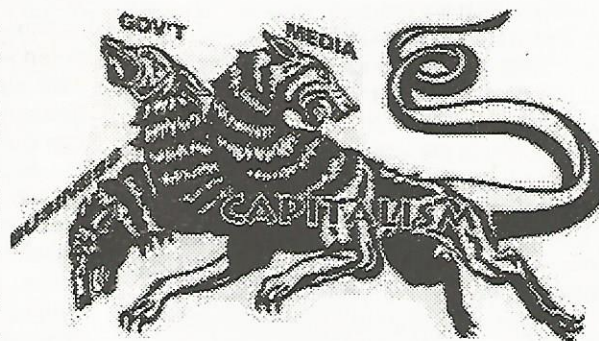
We must expand the floor of our cage in ways that openly conflict with the ruling class, and thus open up greater possibilities for the destruction of capitalism. History shows us we can force

breathing room for ourselves, and we must.

We should use organizational forms and methods which themselves contradict capitalism. That is, non-hierarchical, grassroots, organic organizational forms that subvert the attempts made by the ruling class to strengthen our reliance on institutionalized leadership and hierarchies. Such attempts by the ruling class include voting.

We should use direct action, individually and collectively, instead of relying on people to do things for us. We should demand autonomy, not beg. We should take everything we want, not wait to be given. We should force open liberating possibilities, not hope for change.

We should work to find ways to overcome exchange as much as possible, whenever



possible. We should instead work to build mutual aid in our communities by creating sharing programs that make resources free and available to all.

Most importantly, we should avoid allowing reforms to become ends in and of themselves. We have to understand that reforms only exist because we fight for them, and not because the ruling class wants us to have them. In fact, the ruling class, in order to preserve its power and in order to maintain the growth that capitalism requires, must strip us of anything that gives us power. Thus, reforms are, at best, temporary, which history has shown repeatedly. Reforms provide us with breathing space that we can use to widen and strengthen our movement to destroy capitalism. They are nothing more than that, and if we don't take advantage of them, we will find ourselves set back... as we have been many times when we see reforms as ends instead of means. When reforms become ends, when we use capitalist means of opening breathing spaces (such as voting, mediators and hierarchical organizational forms), we create reformism. Reformism strengthens capitalism by maintaining the illusion that capitalism can be "permanently reformed to meet our needs". Reformism doesn't understand that globalization is the natural movement of capitalism. Reformism doesn't understand that capitalism is class struggle, and thus inequality cannot be



ended save through the movement to end capitalism - in capitalism's final destruction.

Openly contradicting capitalism while working for reforms strengthens the working class movement toward community, strengthens and realizes our desires to be more than "workers in the capitalist machine" and in these ways opens up the possibility of ending capitalism. That is: these ways strengthen and open up revolutionary possibilities.

## SOME SPECIFICS

### Mass Protest

Since Seattle, mass protest has seemingly returned with a vengeance. Every few months somewhere there is a relatively large-scale protest. Unfortunately, many of these protests hang on to the notion of being "symbolic", of making symbolic stands against something instead of concretely attacking it.

Mass protest can have but two main purposes: (1) to directly and concretely stop something from happening, and (2) to inform others about what needs to be stopped. These are both concrete only in as much as "2" leads to "1" and "1" succeeds on some level. If "1" succeeds it will naturally reinforce "2".

In order for concrete attacks to succeed, a diversity of tactics must be encouraged. Shouting slogans, doing civil disobedience, destroying property, fighting with cops and much else all has its place in our tactical repertoire since all can be necessary for success.

For mass protest to succeed, we have to stop worrying about the corporate media, and how they will portray us and what we do. We get only two kinds of press: no press and bad press. It doesn't matter what we do, if they are not ignoring us they are attempting to make us look crazy, stupid and bad. So the best plan is to force them to report that we have succeeded in shutting down another meeting, or succeeding in winning our strike demands, or succeeded in stopping Neiman-Marcus from selling fur, or chased the Klan out of town, or whatnot.

It is important to realize that mass protest is a way of fighting for reforms until the point when it turns into an insurrection. Until then, it doesn't matter if you are holding a sign or throwing a brick through a Starbucks window or fighting with cops, it is reformist in nature. Attacking, and even defeating, parts of the capitalist system (such as a single corporation, or a single state, or a single global entity such as the WTO) is not equivalent to attacking the system as a whole. We can only attack the system as a whole by working to overcome capitalist social relations in our everyday lives, and from that basis attack the parts of the capitalist sys-

tem. And, again, the best way to do this is in ways that contradict capitalism: non-hierarchically, directly, using mutual aid instead of exchange as much as possible.

The most important aspect of mass protest, however, is that part which is more-or-less imperceptible to people who are not there. This is the links which are formed, individually and collectively, by the people who participate. These links enable wider solidarity through wider personal communication, and are galvanized by the success of collective action.

### Dual Power

Mass protest means nothing if we are not "forming the structure of the new society within the shell of the old", if we are not creating bases of power in our communities from which to confront the ruling class and their capitalist system, and which are as autonomous as possible from capitalism. This is known as creating *Dual Power*. "Dual" because our structures of power exist beside and against the ruling class' structures of power.

To do this, we need to take the participatory decision-making, solidarity, respect and encouragement of all kinds of diversity and mutual aid that are being used on the streets and find ways to apply them to our everyday lives. We should find ways of applying them in our homes, workplaces, neighborhoods, schools, and in all of our relationships and interactions.

We can create autonomous community centers in which we can hang out, have meetings, stage cultural events, host speakers, run soup kitchens, organize buying and eating co-ops, organize knowledge and skill shares, play games... the possibilities are endless.

We can build autonomous groups in our workplaces to discuss our problems, come up with solutions and implement them. We can also do this in our neighborhoods by forming autonomous coalitions and assemblies.

And so on. From there we must then find ways of linking our autonomous groupings and centers in our cities, regions and ultimately the world.

Some possibilities of these ideas working can be found in the ongoing Zapatista Revolt in Chiapas, Mexico, the directly democratic General Assemblies and Councils used in most 20th Century revolutions (before they were co-opted or destroyed by groups like the Bolsheviks in Russia) and the farming collectives created by peasants during the Spanish Civil War.

### Discussion, Propaganda and DIY Media

One of the most important aspects of confronting capitalism is to openly propagate

ideas and be willing to discuss them. We cannot be afraid of stating and defending our positions, but we also cannot be afraid to refine and develop our ideas through listening to others and honestly considering their ideas.

We also have to develop means of getting ideas and news that isn't reported by the corporate media out to as many people as possible. To this end, we need to create autonomous media sources.

The Independent Media Centers (IMCs) are a great start. However, we also have to develop means of getting hardcopies of such news into people's hands, especially into the hands of those with no access to the net or who would not stumble on the websites. In this we also have to be careful not to let one autonomous media source be the only voice we hear. We should start our own neighborhood, city and/or regional newssheets and papers, pirate radio stations and television (cable access, perhaps) shows. We can advertise these with flyer and poster, and in one another's initiatives.

The hardcore-punk music scene has created a global, counter-cultural Do-It-Yourself (DIY) network that is autonomous from many aspects of capitalism. With it they communicate, travel / tour, self-release and distribute records, books and 'zines and do a myriad of other things. We should take their example and use it in our initiatives. It can be applied to other sub-cultural scenes, to the publishing and distribution of our own literature and such, to the sharing of resources and possibilities and much else.

## THE END?



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# A New Syndicalism?

by Flint Jones (Roundhouse Collective)

Anarcho-syndicalism has changed a lot from its origin in workers' movements of the late 19th century. It saw many of its practices adopted by reformist institutions, and other practices rendered illegal by the repressive hand of the state. Criticisms have grown outside of workplace related issues, and failures have been revisited time and again. I'd like to constructively address some of those criticisms to develop a revolutionary strategy for tactical intervention within the economic struggles of our class. Organizing around economic means is not enough. There are more struggles than class warfare, but any revolution that doesn't abolish class isn't a revolution. We need to not try to resurrect old models of anarcho-syndicalism, but reincarnate the ideals for a new life in our changing world.

A criticism common these days is the claim that anarcho-syndicalism is dominated by a positivist productionist idea. Indeed, at one time there were many syndicalists that emphasized the parasitism of the rich, and encouraged that science and syndicalism could create a more productive and efficient system. This idea, however, co-existed with the opposition to long work hours, celebrated the free existence of the migrant worker, and shopfloor battles against the deskilling and Taylorization of crafts. Much worker resistance is not just a resistance to capitalism, but a resistance of work in general, particularly when labor is alienated through domination and exploitation.

It is not simply a question of production, but of the kind of production we are involved in. Increasing the amount of junk we have is not beneficial. Having all of our needs and a good number of our desires met with minimal effort and ecological cost, is close to an economic utopia. Quality of life issues like a reduction in working hours and safety protections are old anarcho-syndicalist issues. However, some of the important environmental issues can not be relegated to only what workers do at work, or to the wanton demands of consumers, but also whether there is going to be a toxic waste dump in your backyard (or toxic waste at all!) or to build a dam. Bio-regional, libertarian municipalist, or other communal approaches might offer us a direction to look for additions to workers' and consumers' councils.

Another criticism of anarcho-syndicalism is that it has generally been viewed as primarily being concerned with organizing workers as a labor union. This focus on only organizing with workers at the place of confrontation with their employer limited anarcho-syndicalists to fighting isolated, defensive battles. The old utopian

economic solution of "workers' control" through a union "administration of things" or workers' councils is very limiting since the interests of workers and consumers can be different. Everyone participating in an economic social relationship is a consumer; though not everyone is a worker. As human beings, we are much more than these economic roles, but we are these things as well; and, it is these roles that are the only ones capitalism addresses.

The problem of workers' councils having a monopoly of economic decision-making is addressed in Michael Albert and Robin Hahnel's work on participatory economics (Parecon). Parecon basically advocates federation of workers' councils based in the workplaces and consumers' councils based in the neighborhood. Parecon lacks a revolutionary praxis; they have no way to get their proposed federation. I think there is a way, and that is a worker and consumer syndicalism. We need to organize not only at the point of production, but also along the lines of transportation and communication, as well as at the point of consumption.

Consumers, like workers, need to organize for their own interests, and while more difficult to organize than workers, organizing one can greatly support the other. There are many similarities between organizing a labor union, and organizing a tenants' union or a bus riders' union. Workers and consumers have more in common with each other than they do with the capitalists and bosses.

Syndicalism should be thought of as the practice of organizing along principles of direct action and direct democracy by the exploited for economic action against their exploiters. It's primary weapon being refusal—refusal to work, and refusal to buy. From slow downs on the job, to sabotage; from putting your rent in escrow until the leak is fixed, to a mass rent revolt until rent is lowered. As struggle increases, we move from refusal to occupation and expropriation.

Probably the best criticism coming from council communist influenced groups like the Anarchist Federation (UK) is that unions are defined by their mediation between workers and capitalism. The union bureaucracy becomes separated from the interests of workers as the professional staff acts as mediators and negotiators between workers and employers. The union exists as a permanent economic organization with interests separate from the rank and file. The union bureaucracy attempts to control the workforce through discipline to fulfill contracts, as much as it confronts the employers for a better contract. The union must deliver a docile and stable workforce to the boss or lose its power to

bargain; and to do so it must work to reduce the militancy of spontaneous worker struggle against the employer. The union is your pimp.

While some of this needs to be taken with a grain of salt since many unions do not behave this way, and many of these problems point to a lack of democracy in current unions, or show the difficulty of staying within labor law during struggle, I do think they make an important point. Unions alone cannot be the vehicle for revolution. They are designed as confrontational organizations within a hierarchical economy. They might be good tools for surviving in this environment, but that doesn't mean they are the best tools for destroying capitalism.

Some neo-council communists forget, going so far as to oppose any kind of political organization or even any form of activism, that many of those workers who participated in the spontaneous formation of workers' councils also participated in unions and political factions before struggles became large enough to form councils. Anarcho-syndicalists believe that the unions can be schools for revolution. It gives workers confidence, resources and time so that they can prepare for a revolution. It develops a web of solidarity, mutual aid, and trust that can be developed no other way than through participating collectively with our class in struggles that are reducing the rate of exploitation.

Unfortunately, until there is a revolution, there is always going to be some degree of negotiation between the exploited and the exploiters. If our class organizations refuse to negotiate an eventual return to a rate of exploitation, then the bosses will construct an organization with whom they can negotiate. Eventually they will find enough scabs or break the struggle, forcing us to accept the deal negotiated by a fake union. If we deny ourselves the ability to have at the very least a democratic control over the negotiation process, then we are sure to get fucked by it.

It's a common myth that if we all belonged to the best revolutionary organization, we would gain the critical mass that is in agreement on the correct theoretical and tactical unity and we would then have a revolution! The debate becomes which revolutionary organization is best, and thus which organizations aren't then revolutionary at all. It doesn't take long to see where this will go. It would create a horde of rival sectarian organizations squabbling over whether the Confederacion Nacional Trabajo (CNT) was revolutionary in 1936, before, afterwards, or not at all.

The idea of "One Big Union" (OBU) here is taken out of context. The appeal to the OBU is



a notion of solidarity in action, not a monopoly of revolutionary activity by one body of organized labor. The Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) was very critical of "union scabbing" at the time where one union would continue work (and even increase work with overtime and job loading) while another union was on strike. The idea was that all workers in an industry should strike together. That was the intent of OBU. Workers would support each others' strikes regardless of craft, political party, union affiliation, race, ethnicity, etc...

I think we witnessed this during the general strikes in which the IWW agitated and participated. The IWW contest for the membership of workers with the American Federation of Labor obscured this point. In some ways this is uniquely a phenomenon of the United States labor law which only allows one union to represent workers. This method of election for official recognition by the government of one body of workers' representatives, certainly did much to weaken radical labor unions while giving advantages to business unions.

Unions vary. They vary alot. Even in the U.S. you have a spectrum of unions that include: hierarchical, state-collaborationist, mafia-controlled, corporate, pro-capitalist, sexist, racist, and nationalist unions, some are moderate social-democratic reformers, some are radical anti-capitalist democratic direct action unions, and even others are small formal anarcho-syndicalist groups. All unions are not the same, whether they are officially recognized by the government or not. Whether the government recognizes a body of organized workers isn't really up to us, but rather the government and the employers. When you've got a successful strike, the bosses are desperate to negotiate and grant recognition. Unions, though, are made by the collective actions of the workers, not the paper endorsement of the state or the permission of the capitalists.

If all unions are not the same, then some are better than others. We should do everything we can to encourage better unions. In the better unions we should encourage the support of revolutionary struggle, even if the revolution means the destruction of the organizations (or at least its role as negotiator with the bosses).

In most places, a majority of the workers are not organized into any but the most informal of work resistance organizations. There is plenty of space for a radical union that operates

according to anarcho-syndicalist principles to grow without ever having to challenge the officialdom of the business unions. Perhaps the IWW can today be a banner in which similar efforts can gather.

For those workers who already have a "union" at work, they have to figure out their own strategy. Does it make more sense to try and reform the union toward a revolutionary goal, or does it make more sense to form an alternative and challenge the business union's role? One problem for us from a class perspective is that many vital industries are already in the domain of business unions. Those industries would be essential for the creation of general strikes and revolution. However, the onslaught of neo-liberalism has launched its war against even reformist unions, breaking the decades of "cooperation" between labor unions and capitalists. The AFL-CIO is changing under the strain of assault from the capitalists, increasingly wildcatting workers, local autonomy, and rank & file democratic movements. Other strains include radicals involved as organizers for those portions of the unions that are growing; the class collaboration of some union bosses more interested in acting as pimps; and the fragmentation being created by the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and the withdraw of local unions from central labor councils to setup their own progressive labor councils. As much as we have an opportunity to organize with the unorganized,

we also have opportunities for radicalization in the reformist unions.

We need specifically anarchist groups which spread syndicalist ideals among our class and can provide a perspective, history and theory for our fellow workers to consider. This is to be a leadership of ideas, not a vanguard. These probably need to be no larger than a successful publication group, such as *Anarcho-*

*Syndicalist Review*, though undoubtedly if they are confederated with similar organizations they can increase their reach and ability to intervene.

We need solidarity organizations that build support for workers across lines of industry, craft, locality, nationality; and where the need is across racial, tribal and gender lines. These organizations need to be open to anyone as long as they are willing to working in a directly democratic matter taking direct action in the interests of supporting workers in struggle. A good example here would be the New York City based Direct Action Network Labor group. It's groups like these that will probably do much of the work in spreading the solidarity that will be

needed for successful general strikes.

We need workplace organization. I'm talking about on the ground, bread & butter organizations that help workers survive day-to-day. The kinds of organizations that get us coffee breaks or a pay raise. Sometimes, it will mean negotiation with the State and the Bosses; which means a contract even if all it is is a verbal understanding. Ideally, these would be direct action, directly democratic organizations of workers.

We need organizations pushing for the radicalization of reformist and business unions. These can be networks of rebel workers in the construction trades plotting a wildcat strike, or the activities of militants with a newsletter and alternate slate for the next elections, with a proposal to change the union's constitution to allow more democracy. Hopefully, they will either succeed in changing the union, or in gaining enough supporters to break away and form a rival union that is a better model of workplace organization than the business union.

We need a seed for a new society. For that space we manage to carve out for ourselves through alternative economic organizations, communes and cooperatives, we need to encourage those to grow as an economic rival to capitalism. Much like unions, they are not the revolution unto themselves for they have not escaped the market economy completely, only mitigated it. They do provide important models and can provide employment for the black listed, and cost effective services for our class that objectively improve their income and resources. Workers cooperatives, consumer cooperatives, mutual insurance, credit unions and people's banks are all examples of these kind of alternative economic organizations. They must become confederated with each other, and support each other and the revolutionary movement in general or they will be isolated and destroyed by the competitiveness of capitalist exploitation or the repression of the State. Cooperatives can also learn much from the directly democratic nature of the radical labor and consumer movement--many cooperatives have failed in being cooperative by centralizing decision-making or trying to "compete" in the global market.

By using a multi-organizational economic approach, we can confront the existing power structure and build an alternative through dual power. We can advance from isolated class struggles to a revolutionary movement united in action and solidarity.

While focusing on our class organizations is a good thing, we should always keep in mind that the revolution is not just the organization of unions and their activities. When revolution comes, it is going to be much more spontaneous, chaotic and massive than any of the formal organizational forms in which we participate. Will we be ready?





# *The Road to the Barricades Runs through the Neighborhoods:*

## Encouraging Self-Organization in Communities

by Becky (Sabate Anarchist Collective)

In Boston, as in cities all over the northeast, the housing crisis has intensified. Rents have as much as doubled in the past five years and affordable housing is disappearing at an unprecedented rate as developers buy up investment properties and gentrification encroaches on formerly livable neighborhoods. Evictions have increased by nearly forty percent as well and in a most disgusting turn of events a bill is being discussed in the Massachusetts legislature to allow towns to count prison cells as low-income housing units. But people are fighting back and tenant organizing and solidarity are on the rise.

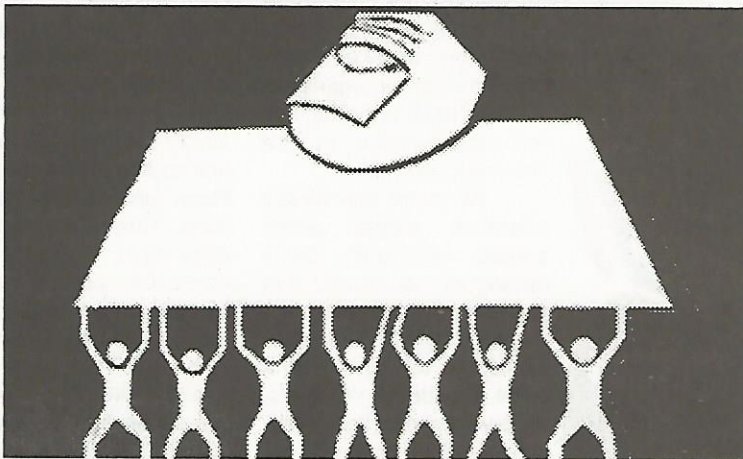
As an anarchist I decided to become involved with a community group doing work on housing issues and tenant organizing. As a renter, I am dealing with the housing crisis and was interested in connecting the work that I do in my collective with work I would like to do in the larger community, hoping to see how the two would intersect. I thought it would be an opportunity to learn from people who have been organizing for years and have been effective at activating people to improve their own lives. I wanted to see how community-based organizing was working in Boston, knowing that I would probably be the only explicitly anarchist person in the group and also knowing that there are people in the revolutionary anarchist movement who would view the work I was involving myself in as reformist. In this article I will explore both of these themes.

Community organizing, which Tom Knoche describes as "social change efforts which are based in local geographically defined areas where people live," has a long history of struggle and success in Boston. City Life/Vida

Urbana (CLVU) is a 30-year-old organization based in Boston's Latino and African-American community of Jamaica Plain. It emerged out of various social struggles in the 1970s and is now working to preserve and build affordable housing and to fight gentrification. A Tenant Organizing Committee formed last winter out of CLVU in response to the overwhelming number of people facing eviction and rent increases throughout the city. The idea behind the committee was to bring together people involved in tenant unions in their own buildings and to support individuals in struggle.

formed in Boston in the past year with the aid of CLVU. In parts of the city artists are organizing to protect warehouses and studio spaces from being consumed by speculators and turned into Internet start-up companies. People are organizing against landlords' attempt to finagle out of guarantees to provide a certain number of low income units and against rent increases buoyed by an out of control housing market. Still other people are putting pressure on landlords to sell buildings to non-profit organizations and tenant unions in order to take units out of the market and put them in the hands of the people who live in them. Tactics have ranged from negotiation with landlords to marches through downtown to lobbying for the return of rent control to noisy demonstrations outside of landlord's offices.

An example of this type of organizing occurred at a 31-unit building in which the owner began eviction proceedings because the tenants refused to pay \$6-800 rent increases. The tenants came together to form a union and began negotiating with the landlord through letters and legal representation. They elicited the aid of a local city counselor and the city housing authority. The landlord's lawyer responded with a letter that fueled the flames, stating that, "We live in a capitalistic society and it is not wrong under our system for [the owner] to seek to make a profit. In fact profit is at the very core of our society." The union began to build ties with other tenant unions in the area, rallies were held, and eviction notices were burned in protest. The landlord began to soften with increased pressure from the media. Eventually the landlord relented to the union's demands for smaller increases and rent stability. This agreement softened the tone of the final rally that was held outside of his office on a busy weekday morning. When people begin to look at the issue of landlords making money off of their vulnerability, the real crime of rent is laid bare. A critique of capitalism emerges and as people work through their struggles, escalating the intensity of their tactics as need be, their



We discuss how to support and show solidarity with one another and how to spread the word that organizing to fight landlord greed is an option. Additionally we hope to initiate a discussion in the community about fundamental issues of capitalism as they relate to rent and housing. Rent control, the immorality of market-rate rents, gentrification, and citywide solidarity have been some of the topics focussed on in the past few months. The base for the committee is tenant organizers from around the city and it is these people who guide the work of the group. Therefore an important part of each meeting is a brain-storming session on possible strategies for current struggles.

Nearly twenty tenant organizations have



militancy grows organically out of necessity.

Mass building take-overs and squats have not occurred yet in Boston, but the discussion of housing is being opened and radicalized. So the question arises: should we, as revolutionary anarchists, work with organizations whose final analysis is not anarchist and whose tactics we may consider reformist, and if so, how? Robert Fisher dissected neighborhood organizing in this way: "While neighborhood organizing is a political act, it is neither inherently reactionary, conservative, liberal or radical, nor is it inherently democratic and inclusive or authoritarian and parochial. It is above all a political method, an approach used by various segments of the population to achieve specific goals, serve certain interests, and advance clear or ill-defined political perspectives."

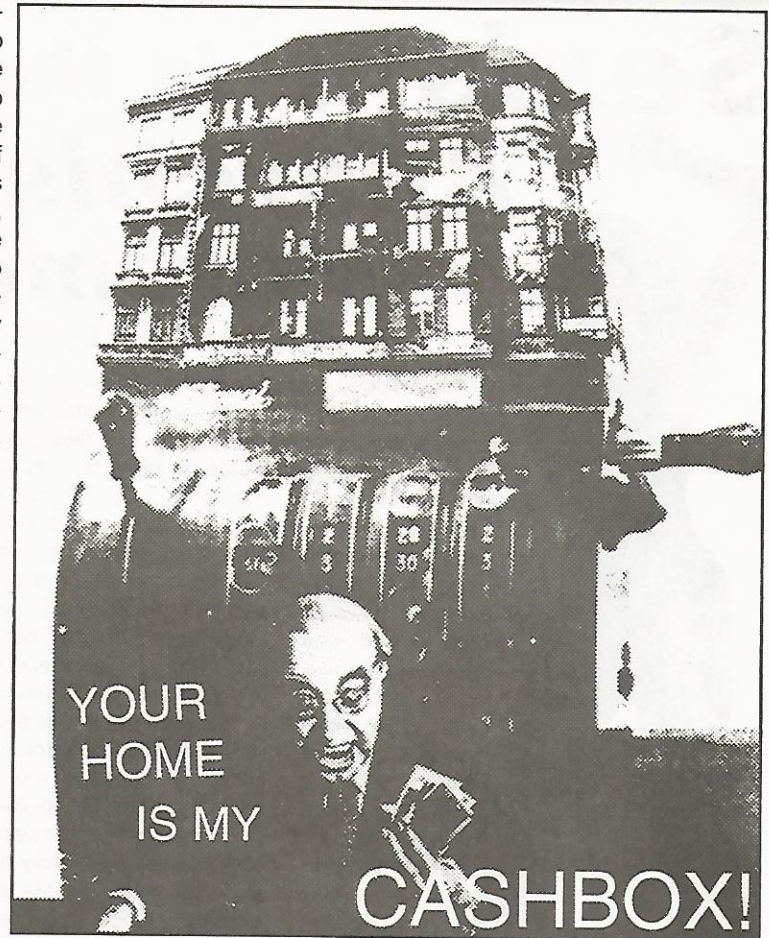
There are no doubt problems of hierarchy and straight-up liberalism in some community organizations. The battles fought are sometimes ones that will make no real change for those who need it most. But I think we must examine exactly what "reformist" means within local struggles. There is a great difference between people, even radicals, working for others and people working for control of their own lives and becoming empowered by this struggle. Perhaps what we can infuse into such struggles is a revolutionary vision including a structural and over-arching critique. At the same time we can learn lessons in effective strategizing and escalation of tactics that community organizers have been developing for years.

People organizing for their own survival generally don't have to be told they are getting screwed. They can feel it. We should look at the radicalizing potential of such struggles before we pronounce them to be not sufficiently revolutionary. Attacking the work of communities that are uniting in real struggle because they are viewed as reformist smacks of privilege; too often those unable to take on the risk of arrest or physical harm are dismissed and the direction of revolutionary work is held hostage by machismo. I see value in working in solidarity with others around the world during global days of action; these are ego boosting and fun, as well as useful for opening space for dialogue. But it takes an entirely different kind of energy and commitment to look around in our own communities and examine the relationships there, work to change them or to challenge capitalism on a local scale alongside those who have not adopted a particular ideology. It is easier to support the Zapatistas, for example, than it is to confront our own attitudes - which may be paternalistic and racist - by becoming involved in grassroots struggles in our own cities.

For the revolutionary struggle to grow it has become necessary to expand beyond the relative comfort of our autonomous zones. Excitingly, the idea of a free society is a topic to be that is being discussed by many rather than dismissed as fantastical and the reception for anarchists within this conversation is warmer than it has been in a long time. At the same time I feel that we must be wary of intervening in community and class struggles in a patronizing way, touting our ideological development and purity. Our goal must be always to encourage self-organization and self-education as a way for people to gain control over their lives. I also think that it is important for anarchists to participate and help in the growth of the communities around them and to admit that they may learn something in the process.

Tom Knoche wrote that, "anarchist community organizing must be dedicated to changing what we can today and undoing the socialization process that has depoliticized so many of us." Our ways of interacting and creating must be innovative and revolutionary. That is what autonomous struggle and anarchism is about, letting each person find his or her full potential and sharing our strengths and experiences to build a society that none of us could have imagined alone. We will have to argue and compromise and grow.

Our future society will not be won solely with revolutionary rhetoric. In working with groups that aren't specifically anarchist we will be transformed by the experience at the same time we transform the groups we work with, realizing that in neighborhoods that have been organizing themselves for years we are the people who have much to learn. In participating in the conversations at the Tenant Organizing Committee, I have been excited by the possibility of building solidarity and linking struggles. People who are involved in self-



motivated, self-organized struggles carry this potential on into other parts of their lives. They are more apt to unite to reclaim power from bosses, landlords and other oppressors. Only by engaging in concrete acts of local solidarity and by putting our actions where our revolutionary rhetoric is will we begin to transform society on a large scale.

## Futher Reading Suggestions:

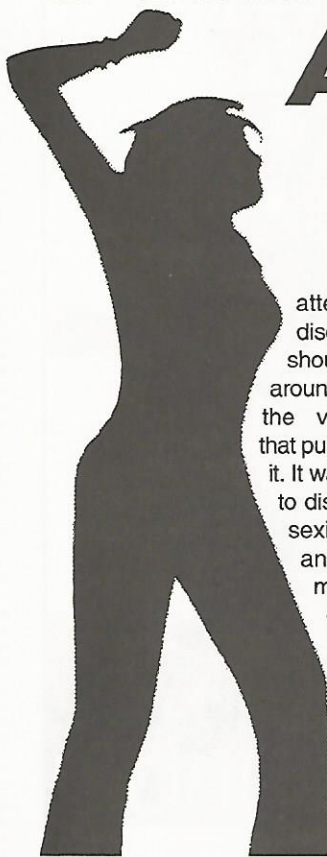
(Knoche, Tom) *Organizing Communities: Building Anarchist Grassroots Movements*. Essay first published in the journal *Social Anarchism*; reprinted as a pamphlet

(Fisher, Robert) *Let the People Decide: Neighborhood Organizing in America* Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1984



# Sexism in the Anarchist Movement

by Angela Beallor (Kent ABCF)



This article is an attempt to add to the discourse that is (or should be) occurring around sexism within the very movements that purport to be fighting it. It was a hard process to distinguish between sexism within the anarchist movement and the general sexism within society because so many of the criticisms that can be leveled against the anarchist movement are criticisms of the greater society.

There is a void where critical anarchist feminist/anti-sexist critiques should be which has lead to a lack of dialogue and concrete action around sexism. This critique will be based upon many of the weaknesses within the Anarchist movement, which are often compounded around issues of sexism (and other forms of oppression). There is a continuum of thought and concrete action which anarchists must address or take up in order to combat our own sexism and sexism in the greater society.

## Challenging Ideas and Behaviors

The continuum begins with our personal thoughts and behavior. Growing up in a sexist society imbues within us the idea that women are inferior to men. Unless these ideas are thoroughly challenged, in every aspect of our lives, every waking minute, then these ideas are allowed to flourish in our behavior. Many may feel this is an obvious point, but as Kevin Powell wrote in a recent *Ms.* article, "Everyday I struggle within myself not to use the language of gender oppression, to see the sexism inherent in every aspect of America, to challenge all injustices, not just those that are convenient for me."

Anti-sexism is not just about fighting overt

forms of sexism - violent rape, domestic violence, overtly sexist words - it is also about challenging our relationships, the ideas that create a rape culture, the way people are socialized, etc. These are not convenient issues to struggle around for they involve digging deep within ourselves, traveling back in our development, and dedicating time to the difficult process of self-change. We must challenge the ideas and behaviors that promote sexism to other men and alienate women-both in personal relationships and in organizations.

Recognizing that anti-sexist work is a deep, hard process is very important but a point many miss. All too often men who are genuinely against sexism fail to acknowledge and challenge the sexism that lies within themselves. "I AM an anti-sexist," they proclaim. But it is said so loudly that they fail to hear the voices of women. It becomes a label to proudly sport instead of a serious and difficult process. Don't get me wrong, if a man is indeed anti-sexist, he needs to display it, but this is accomplished through his actions and in his explanations of our current reality- especially to other men. Men must become examples to challenge the mainstream notions of masculinity and that takes more than a simple label.

Often complexities arise, however, when women challenge "anti-sexist" men. Men get defensive when women critique their oppressive and sexist behaviors. Rather than listening and benefiting from criticism, a defensive stance is taken and women's voices are ignored once again. No one is above being questioned, as there should be no unnecessary hierarchy. The lack of principled criticism and self-criticism within the anarchist movement is the first problem that is then compounded when applied to issues of sexism and other forms of oppression. Women must be genuinely listened to and, if the criticisms are valid, men should seek to change their thoughts and their actions.

## Political Study

Understanding sexism is important to all within the anarchist movement. However, as a woman, it is not my duty to always answer questions and educate men on how sexism affects my life. Many anarchist groups already

have a program or project in place that could be utilized to gain a better understanding of sexism without burdening women with the task of explaining our lives: the political study group. When was the last time you or your group read something on women, sexism, feminism, or women's liberation?

Many times, and I have been guilty of this, we feel that readings on women's issues are not as important as readings on capitalism or anarchism or anti-colonial struggle, etc. We have to stop considering women's liberation as a side project or issue and view it as an integral part of the liberation struggle. These writings do not have to be specifically Anarchist or even revolutionary to give us good insights. When was the last time you read something by Audre Lorde, bell hooks, Barbara Smith, Angela Davis, Patricia Hill Collins, or Emma Goldman? We must take the initiative to read that which women have placed before us.

## Encouraging Women

Since I was a little girl, I was socialized to feel inferior to men. I was socialized to recognize where my "place" was in society and it was not participating in an equal dialogue with men, certainly not in any type of politics, and it was definitely not on any kind of front line of revolutionary struggle. I often look around at meetings and events (that are not women-centric) and see that I am one of a handful of women in attendance or worse yet, the only woman there. Alternately, even when there are a lot of women in the room, I find that I am the only woman contributing to the dialogue.

When examining women's involvement in political struggle, we have to examine the root causes. Women are socialized to look at politics as outside of our realm. When the politics are radical or revolutionary, the level of intimidation increases. Because of this reality, we have to exert a lot of time and energy into creating a more anti-sexist/pro-woman movement. We have to start by involving more women within our organizations and movements. This first involves putting sexism as one of the main points of organization alongside the other issues affecting women (and all humans): racism, heterosexism, ableism, colonialism, and class oppression. While we cannot place all of our energy into all of these problems at once, we must ensure we are dealing holistically with all of these issues within our focus. Second, we must actively recruit women into our organizations. This takes various forms such as tabling at women's events, consistent outreach to women and participating in women-centric struggles.

Once women are in our organizations, we must look at the level of participation of women within the organization. I have been involved with politics for 7+ years. It has only



been within the past year and a half that I have fully participated in politics. This is because I have had to learn that I could speak in meetings, that I could contribute in meaningful and positive ways, and that it is my place to contribute and participate. I have had to overcome the intimidation I felt when I was working with men who I looked up to and respected. I had to overcome the mental chains that were holding me back.

A couple factors contributed to this change. A dear comrade helped me realize that I am fully capable of participating and that no one can say different. For him, it was crucial that I participate on an equal level and he put a great deal of time and energy in encouraging me. I would love to see more men take up this task. Then, my level of commitment, seriousness, and sense of responsibility to liberatory politics forced me to put my level of involvement above my sense of comfort. This was not an easy task at all and one that I still struggle with to this day. This is something that we all have to battle within ourselves; men can help women get to this point by treating women equally and respectfully. We also must analyze our organizational behaviors. Are we consistently encouraging women to take up leadership positions? Is it mostly men or women who are taking up speaking engagements? Who talks at meetings? Who facilitates meetings? Who does the work of the organization, and then, who gets credit for it? We have to be very perceptive of men talking over women, invalidating and/or ignoring a woman's words and contributions.

We all must make an extra effort to look at the gender dynamics of our functions and meetings. Without the direct leadership of women in any movement, our important voices are left out of the dialogue and the fight against sexism.

## Anarchist Organizational Structures

One of the biggest challenges to the anarchist movement is creating viable anti-authoritarian structures for our organizations. We are struggling to create new ideas of organization from the examples we have had and through new ideas and innovations. Not only are we trying to organize our movement in an anarchist fashion but it is also a testing ground for a future society.

Anarchism seeks to create a society based on a great sense of personal responsibility and accountability to ourselves and each other. We want a society based on mutual aid and communalism. This cannot happen out of spontaneous activity; it must result out of a highly organized society based on democratic, decentralized structures. I hope the anarchist movement realizes the need to work out new structural ideas for our organizations and a new society. I know many feel creating structure inherently runs counter to the ideas and principles of

Anarchism. I would argue that not sitting down and forming democratic structures is counter to the ideas and principles of anarchism.

Jo Freeman wrote in *The Tyranny of Structurelessness* that "The idea of structurelessness does not prevent the formation of informal structures, only formal ones. A 'laissez-faire' ideal for group structure becomes a smoke screen for the strong or the lucky to establish unquestioned hegemony over others. Thus structurelessness becomes a way of masking power. As long as the structure of the group is informal, the rules of how decisions are made are known only to the few, and awareness of power is limited to those who know the rules."

Structurelessness is often a means to perpetuate sexism, racism and class stratification. If men are socialized to be leaders and women are not, then it is not hard to imagine who would develop into leaders in a non-structured organization. A lack of structure provides no means of balancing those with certain privileges with those who are oppressed. We must create organizational structures that inherently guard against these forms of power imbalance.

In forming Anarchist organizational structures, we must also form structures to specifically deal with sexism in our organizations. One very sensitive issue that we have to address is sexual assault (and domestic violence). I have heard of many situations where a politically active male has sexually assaulted a fellow activist. It would be impossible to plan out all of the steps of dealing with this type of situation—especially since the survivor of sexual assault should largely control what happens—but we need a skeleton of steps to help handle this type of situation. Members of any organization should all have political education on both rape and sexual assault and how to deal when you or someone you know has been raped. Organizations should have a framework so that they are not fumbling around when sexual assault happens. Not having a framework could leave a survivor with little to no support from those whom should be providing as much support as she or he needs.

What can anarchist organizations do in these situations? What do we do if one amongst us is sexually assaulted? What do we do if one amongst us has sexually assaulted someone else? What do we do when both parties are in our organization? I challenge all organizations to consider how to prevent sexual assault from occurring in the first place, how to deal with it if it does, and how to support survivors of sexual assault to the fullest extent possible.

## Taking up Womens' Struggle

The struggle against sexism is everyone's struggle. It affects everyone: men, women and transgendered peoples. It is especially

important that anti-sexist men, who benefit from sexism, take up the struggle for women's liberation. Just as it is especially important for white people to dedicate themselves to anti-racist struggle and straight people to dedicate themselves to anti-homophobia/heterosexism work, men must dedicate an intense amount of time to anti-sexist work.

For anarchist men, the question is, are you involved with struggles spontaneously taken up by women, led and organized by women, and primarily aimed at other women? If not, why? I have heard the claim that many of the struggles are "too reformist." In some cases this is my critique as well but I do not see a revolutionary struggle in the United States that is able to aid women in the ways these movements do. The answer is not to ignore these movements but to build new movements within or without that which already exists. Are anarchists creating alternate structures for survivors of sexual assault? Are we able to aid abused women in a revolutionary fashion at this point in time?

Others brush anti-sexist struggle off as "women's work." Others do not see anti-sexist struggle as central to the struggle for liberation. Others believe we can wait to challenge sexism when revolutionary change occurs. These analyses must change. If we truly want an egalitarian society then we must begin creating a more equitable movement—along lines of race, class, gender, and sexuality. We must make the anarchist movement a women's movement. If we want an end to sexism, our work should have begun yesterday.

## Forward Always, Backwards Never

Anarchists often have a good analysis of the way sexism is "a mesh of practices, institutions, and ideas which have an overall effect of giving more power to men than to women." Beginning with an institutional analysis is correct, however, we must also translate this into our own thoughts and actions. Only then can all anarchists work together most effectively (at least along gender lines but we must also deal with homophobia, racism and class issues). To create an egalitarian society, our movement must be egalitarian and presently it is not. Working to create revolutionary change must begin today by challenging our sexist, racist, and heterosexist capitalist society. It means challenging that which is in ourselves, our families, our neighborhoods, our communities and our movements. As Kevin Powell said, "Just as I feel it is whites who need to be more vociferous about racism in their communities, I feel it is men who need to speak long and loud about sexism among each other."

The Anarchist movement needs to be more vocal and active in the struggle against sexism. All our lives depend on it.



# Anarchism and Collective Organization

by Matt (Sabate Anarchist Collective)

**"As we see it, the anarchist-communist vision of society and revolutionary activity is fundamentally based on collective organization"**

-- Building the Federation: A Primer for Forming Local Anarchist-Communist Collectives (NEFAC)

Because of the frequent mass demonstrations that have been occurring in the past couple of years, a lot of people in the anarchist movement have formed, joined, participated in, or otherwise been involved with an affinity group. In fact, many people have been turned on to anarchist politics after experiencing first hand the efficient and empowering action that can come out of a solid affinity group. Working closely with people that share a mutual trust and respect, as well as a common strategy and vision proves the anarchist method of organizing far better than the most eloquent anarchist thinker. After all, it has its roots in what most of us consider to be the farthest reaching attempt at anarchist social revolution - the Spanish Civil War.

What is of note that relates very closely to then and now is that the anarchist affinity groups of the Spanish Civil War didn't form in the weeks prior to July 1936 - in many cases, they had been around for years. They formed as study groups for self-education; for propaganda purposes - printing and distributing newspapers and pamphlets: they formed as class conscious individuals saw a need for more

organization at the grassroots level, more widespread radical education, and a more strategized method of agitation.

Today, when considering what work we are doing and have been involved with, and what type of impact we, as anarchists, will have in the future, the question of forming collectives becomes a very important one to look at. From the perspective then that working in collectives and helping others to

form them is something that anarchists should be doing, I hope to discuss some of the practical considerations that might come up in the formation of a collective and its subsequent work.

Most of us have spent a lot of (generally well spent) time and energy working as individuals in coalitions, networks, and organizations that are generally syncretist with their politics - groups that form around a specific issue or campaign or that do specific, routine projects with folks from a multitude of political persuasions involved. There is often little discussion of politics and the space to discuss theory and tactics as they might relate to a strategy of struggle is generally absent. We can and need to question the overall strategy behind this type of work and the effectiveness at achieving stated goals but there are instances where this work has been and continues to be important. The Zapatista support work in the US and Canada, and the activity

being undertaken to free Mumia have often happened under this structure. Recent local anti-FTAA coalitions have also shown that this work can be positive and effective.

However, the point I want to make is that as a collective (rather than an individual),

anarchists can have a stronger impact contributing to such struggles as well as initiating campaigns and struggles that we can be openly radical with and assure that the work is carried out with a revolutionary perspective even though we may be fighting for a reformist victory. Not only that, but in a collective with people we know well, respect, and trust we create an environment ripe for personal and political growth. We can take a small step in

the process of creating social alternatives to our alienating and competitive existence under capitalism.

**"The uniqueness of developing collectives is their definitive break with all hierarchic forms of organization"**

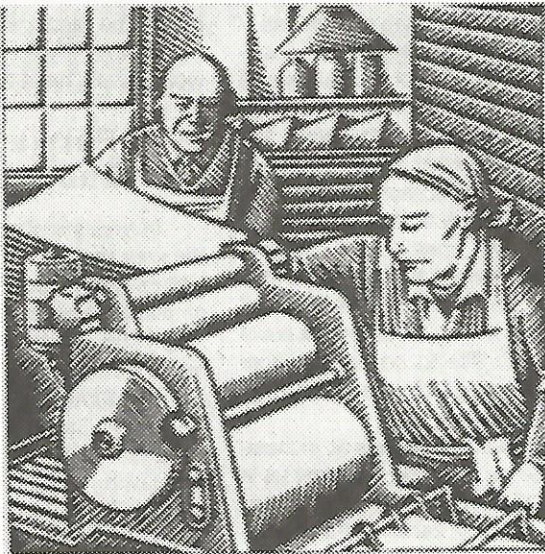
-- Anti-Mass Methods for Organizing Collectives

Deciding to join or form an anarchist collective is more of a decision about working with a particular group of people than committing to do political work. Both are important, but since most of us are, in some capacity or another, already involved with radical politics the former needs more consideration. With that in mind, the choice of people you want to work with takes on more priority and immediacy than specific projects or campaigns you might engage in. Looking around you at work, in your neighborhood, city, town, or at school, ask yourself who it is that you respect; who's been involved with projects that you thought were solid; who, in your conversations seems to argue along similar lines as yourself; who is someone you could learn from as well as potentially teach something to? These are some of the questions that can lead to the formation of a collective. If it is probably accurate to assume that anarchists number about 1 to every 1,000-10,000 people in North America then most of us shouldn't have too difficult of a time finding other people that would be interested in forming a collective.

**"The Strength of the collective lies in its social organization, not its numbers. Once you think in terms of recruiting, you might as well join the army"**

-- Anti-Mass Methods for Organizing Collectives

A common mistake to avoid is starting a collective with people simply because they call themselves anarchists. In North America today, there are "anarchists" that brutalize women, "anarchists" that vote for presidents, "anarchists" that care more about their patches than real social change, and "anarchists" who think a huge majority of the human population should die. The point here isn't to call for some abstract theoretical anarchist purity, but





to be aware that a common strategy and vision is sometimes easier to find with people who do not label themselves as anarchists. What should never be overlooked in the formation of a collective is that, anarchists or not, the group must have theoretical and tactical unity.

The members of any collective should not only share the same political analysis but the strategy and tactics involved must be agreed upon as well. This is a major point that distinguishes the collective form of organizing from more broad-based coalitions or networks. In pursuing this unity, one of the more important things that a newly formed collective can do is draft out a political statement detailing not only a critique of the contemporary system but a vision as well. This collective discussion, though obviously inward functioning, can establish a solid framework for long-term involvement in social movements. Though it is fluid and changes as the collective's experiences do, writing the statement begins the process of helping those involved in the collective to become more articulate and knowledgeable in regards to understanding our exploitative and oppressive system. In addition, it offers a concise picture of your politics to other individuals or collectives that may be interested in the work you're doing and possibly want to start a relationship. It also engages our desires and imagination in thinking about a vision for a society where life could be enjoyed rather than stolen.

**"The collective has the right to exclude individuals because it offers them the alternative of starting a new collective - sharing the responsibility for organization"**

-- Anti-Mass Methods for Organizing Collectives

Oftentimes, a collective is viewed with suspicion and seen as exclusive or elitist by other activists. This is usually an issue of people not understanding the organizational idea of a group that functions with a closed membership. The point isn't to act as an all-star team of activists but to build trust and relationships

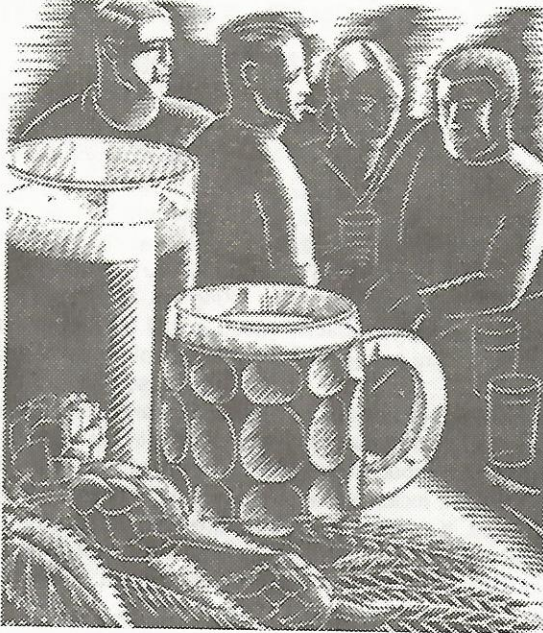
while being engaged in social struggle from a common platform. It is important to explain this to people and to address those who express interest in joining. When it doesn't make sense to open the membership to an individual who is interested in joining, the collective should encourage and help that person to form another collective. This project of encouraging others to form collectives should be a constant one for any collective.

In addition to constantly advocating for others to self-organize, another way a collective can combat the perception of exclusivity is by getting involved with current struggles in your area or by initiating campaigns in your community that present the possibility for numerous people and groups to work together. This will give the group visibility and show that

your collective doesn't exist for reasons of ideological purity. While there may be some work that is more effectively accomplished by the collective alone, don't let the group devolve into some kind of activist nucleus that is only concerned with perpetuating its existence.

It is definitely time for anarchists to begin to seriously consider getting more organized. Moving beyond the protest circuit and looking at ways to transform the anarchist movement, into something rooted in the community and educated from experience confronting the system where we meet it on a day to day basis, begins not only a revolutionary strategy, but its examination as well. And in many ways, forming collectives and engaging in social struggle at that level mirrors a vision of an anarchist society where autonomous, egalitarian, non-hierarchical groups of people work with each other and with other collectives to achieve common goals. That model - opposed to leaders, inimical to authority and oppression, and at odds with reformism - should give us a basis of organization that can begin to challenge the entire system.

**"The core principles that anarchist groups need to embody in their daily practice, are the liberatory principles of autonomy, equality, cooperation, and personal empowerment - qualities**



**that are the underpinnings of a free society. Means and ends must be inseparable both in interpersonal relations...and in political practice."**

-- Brian Tokar, Institute for Social Ecology

## For Further Reading:

*The Tyranny of Structurelessness*  
by Jo Freeman

<http://www.nefac.org/theory/freeman1.html>

*Anarchism in Action: Methods, Tactics, Skills, and Ideas*  
by Shawn Ewald

<http://www.radio4all.org/aia/>

*Anarchism and Organization*  
by Mike (AF - Nottingham)

<http://www.nefac.org/theory/acf1.html>

*Beyond Resistance: A Revolutionary Manifesto for the Millennium*  
by the Anarchist Federation (Britain)  
<http://burn.ucsd.edu/~acf/ace/manifest.html>

*Role of the Anarchist Organization*  
by the Workers Solidarity Movement (Ireland)  
<http://flag.blackened.net/revolt/ppapers/role.html>

*A Practical Guide to Anarchist Organization*  
by the Workers Solidarity Movement (Ireland)  
<http://flag.blackened.net/revolt/ap/organise.html>

*Organizational Platform of the Libertarian Communists*

by the Dielo Trouda (Workers' Cause) Group  
<http://www.nefac.org/theory/platform.html>

*Anarchism and Organization*  
by Errico Malatesta

<http://www.nefac.org/theory/malatesta1.html>

*Manifesto of Libertarian Communism*  
by Georges Fontenis

<http://www.nefac.org/theory/fontenis1.html>

*Anti-Mass Methods of Organization for Collectives*  
by anonymous

[can be ordered through AK Press;  
<http://www.akpress.org>]

*Anarchist Organization: The History of the FAI*  
by Juan Gomez Casas  
[can be ordered through AK Press]

*Organization Means Commitment (Commitment is the Key!)*  
by anonymous

[can be ordered through AK Press]



# Civil Rights, the Black Panthers, Anarchism, and Today:

**An interview with Lorenzo KomBoa Ervin and JoNina Abron**

by YearZero

*In May 2000 two anarchist ex-Black Panthers from America did a British speaking tour. Lorenzo KomBoa Ervin and JoNina Abron talked to groups ranging from white anarchists to mass black meetings on police racism. Between them they have 70 years of political activity spanning lives that have included everything from teaching at a revolutionary community school to hijacking a plane and taking it to Cuba. They conceded to being interviewed in sunny Brighton after a record-buying spree (for their pirate radio station) to dazzle the gods. Both are now involved in the Black Autonomy Network of Community Organizers.*

*Perhaps you could tell us how you both got radicalized?*

**JoNina:** The thing that actually got me was the assassination of Martin Luther King in April of 1968. At that point I was at college. When he was assassinated, it really began to make me think. It was suddenly obvious the way he was going about things was not going to work.

Right after he was assassinated, I went with some other students to Zimbabwe (which was then still Rhodesia). I was very naive. I knew nothing about international capitalism or imperialism, nothing. Now I was so naive as to think that Africa was a continent that was controlled by African people. I got over to Zimbabwe and we were out in the countryside and I saw this sign saying Coca-Cola. So that was really the beginning for me to understand the role of the United States and Western imperialism.

**Lorenzo:** In my case, it was the beginning of the student sit-ins in 1960. The sit-ins swept the South that year. I was ten years old at that time. It was Chattanooga round about in March when we had the demonstrations there against segregation. Black youth actually fought it out on the streets with the Ku Klux Klan and the white racist cops. The resistance was really widespread. For a young black kid at that time to see the entire community rising up against these racists; that really affected me, radicalized me.

The people came, led by the youth; they challenged the white power structure, the years of abuse. The youth weren't controlled by the black or white adults. We were the ones that had the demonstrations, led the sit-

ins, and did the grassroots work. We shook that town up the way it's never been shook up before. We had occupations of the premises of white racists: stores that wouldn't serve black people. We'd go in, demand to be served, and, of course, they would ignore you or just outright tell you that they weren't going to serve you. "We don't serve niggers here." I remember one of the kids threw back the line "Well, I didn't come to buy a nigger, I came to buy a hamburger!"

The sit-ins were the initial act of resistance that propelled the whole generation of student and youth protest. It went on all through those years of the 1960s into the '70s, including the Black Panther Party which was, in many ways, a transformation of the students and youth themselves as well as the movements that they were becoming part of. At first, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) was made up of all the groups of youths that had been involved in the earlier sit-in campaigns.

## The Birth of Black Power

*Could you tell us about the birth of the Black Panther Party (BPP)?*

**JoNina:** The Party was started in 1966. It was part of the whole Black Power thing, it was just one of many Black Power groups.

*Was it a seamless transition, or was the emergence of the Black Power movement a reaction to some of the earlier stuff?*

**Lorenzo:** No, it was very much competition between old and new forces. King had a group called the Southern Christian Leadership Congress. There was another group, ACT and the Congress for Racial Equality. All those groups at that time were in opposition to Black Power. Certainly King. He was shocked by it. There was a confrontation that occurred in the June 1966 march through Mississippi. That was the one where 'Black Power' the concept was made public. It was a march with all the factions—one of the few times in the Civil Rights movement when all the factions had come together. There was a great deal of resentment and fear on the part of King about the Black Power movement and

the youth. King and his organization had always been in conflict and competition with the youth. At any rate, that so-called 'March against Fear' in Mississippi is where the confrontation between Stokely Carmichael (who was at that time the chair of SNCC) and Dr. Martin Luther King became direct.

King would get up and speak, as he would, used to call for Federal intervention and talking about voting rights and all that—which was, by then, passé. Willy Rix worked with SNCC, under Stokely actually. And he told him, "Man, the people in the streets are ready for Black Power, every time I say 'Black Power' they go holler and scream". Anyway, so Stokely, he got arrested the previous night. He was angry and he came out and gave a speech. King had just spoken. And he got up and just said, "You know, I'm just damned tired of this, I've been arrested too many damned times for this. Every time I show my face in Mississippi these damned cops just arrest me." He said "You know, we need to get our hands on some political power, we need some Black Power." All the people started screaming "Black Power! Black Power!" And it shocked the shit out of the white press; it shocked the whole Civil Rights leadership. It really shocked the hell out of them. King was lost for words. Black Power came into existence, at least the public image of it—at that moment. And then shortly after that, in '67, was when Rix, Stokely and some others then became part of the Black Panther Party. Because Huey Newton wanted a merger between the Panthers and the much larger SNCC, The merger wasn't seamless at all. There were all sorts of forces inside each organization that didn't trust the other.

## The Panthers Merge With SNCC

*Tell us about your involvement in the Panthers.*

**Lorenzo:** I went in with the merger. This is a curious situation, it's one of the few times, historically in the black struggle, where members of one organization were drafted (in the word used at that time) into a new smaller



organization that had just been in existence maybe not even a year. Huey Newton understood what he had in terms of his own forces—young and inexperienced organizers, 'brothers off the block'. SNCC was an organization that had trained organizers and a method of struggle. Believe me, through the years we've learned if you've got trained organizers you can do a hell of a lot more than if you've got someone who just walks in off the street. Anyway, he wanted to bring in the SNCC organizers and he thought the way to do that was to recruit the three main leaders—Stokely Carmichael, H. Rap Brown and James Foreman.

Immediately from the inside of SNCC there was a firestorm of resistance, because all those guys inside SNCC had factions of support. Many raised questions about the idea of going into the BPP. They were saying, "Nobody consulted us! We didn't vote on this matter! This is undemocratic". What this did was really tie the tail of Stokely Carmichael because he was chairman. People said, "This guy is just taking powers in a way that SNCC has never done before". Up until that point SNCC had always been an anti-authoritarian organization. In fact, at one stage, in the early-mid '60s, Paul Goodman [editor of the anarchist magazine *The Liberator*] actually called it an anarchist organization. They had never had any kind of strong leadership and central committee until he got in power. So it was already rumbling about that—when he came into office he brought in a central committee and then he goes into the Black Panther Party—"What the hell is going on?" Inside the Black Panther Party there were those that were afraid that because SNCC was a large organization it would take over. So there was all this tension in both these organizations and that had a lot to do with what happened to me when I came in. It was in the middle of that, coming out of SNCC, that I went into the BPP.

**JoNina:** And the merger didn't last long. On the one hand there were personality problems, but of course the government were intent upon it not lasting. They did all they could do to sow discord. If they had been able to stay together it would have been powerful. With the talent and experience of the SNCC organizers and then with what the BPP had accomplished in its short period of existence. But it didn't last long.

**Lorenzo:** What's so amazing is that Newton understood it. Nobody understood it—even the guys he drafted in. They didn't understand what he saw in terms of what the government and police were going to do. They did exactly what he had suspected, they moved in on him. He was shot and almost killed after that. If it hadn't been for the merger there would not have been anyone to take the organization over at that time. People don't like

to admit that at this late date, but it's true.

**JoNina:** Kathleen Cleaver was one of the people who played a really important role in Huey's defense after he had been shot and set up by the police, accused of killing a cop and severely wounding another, whilst he himself was seriously injured. Kathleen came out of SNCC herself, so she was an experienced organizer. She was able to take charge of that campaign and make it into an international campaign. If she hadn't, Huey might have spent many years in prison. She could do it because she was an experienced SNCC organizer before she had joined the BPP.

**Lorenzo:** Exactly. You could not overstate the importance of having SNCC at that stage, of Kathleen Cleaver pushing the 'Free Huey' movement, because the politics of the Black Panther Party was made known to millions of people. That's no exaggeration whatsoever. Millions of people worldwide heard of the BPP who wouldn't have otherwise. And it pushed it way beyond the stage when it started; just one of a number of Black Power organizations. It pushed it to the front the very front.

**JoNina:** After Huey was shot and put in prison, that's when the membership really began to swell. Because of the 'Free Huey' campaign and word got out you know, about this. So the membership grew, and grew rather quickly. It had been a very small group and then it started spreading to all of the major cities of the United States, and a lot of that had to do with what happened after Huey was shot. Incidentally, the police tried to kill him and frame him in October 1967.

## Learn From The Past

*Do you have any thoughts on mistakes made by the Black Panther Party and what can be learnt from them?*

**Lorenzo:** I would start at the structure of the organization. One of the things that always sticks out in my mind is how the BPP failed in terms of the leadership question. The leadership was not accountable to the membership. After it became obvious that Huey Newton was clearly disabled [to put it kindly—suffering from mental paranoia not helped by

heavy amounts of cocaine and an overdose of power] we weren't able to remove him.

I think this whole question of cadre organizations as opposed to broad based structures—cadres are just the arms and eyes and ears of the leadership of the structures. Organizations should be broad based; based in and controlled by the community. I guess I'm more in favor of some of the SNCC politics. If you could merge the two and have abroad based organization with a politically focused and militant stand I think that you've got a chance to build a mass movement and stave off repression.

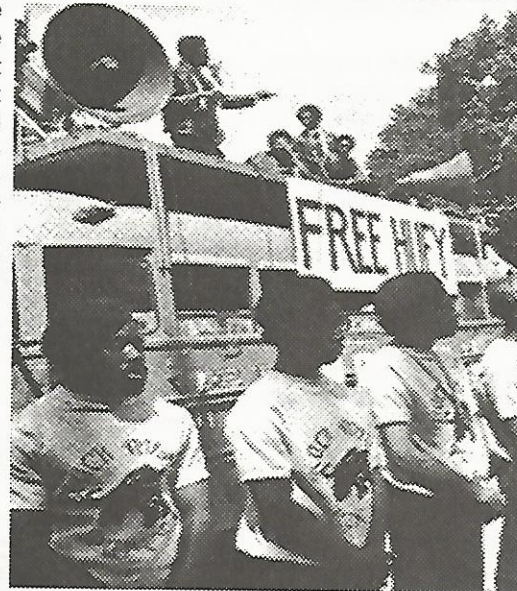
Clearly having a tight organization didn't stave off repression in the BPP. Part of the reason it didn't is because of the leadership. I mean, I can't lay everything at the leadership, we didn't carry our role in terms of challenging as a body what we saw was clearly wrong and

was harming the organization.

What happens to the masses of people is more important than any organization. That was a lesson that was hard to learn. I was told that by Martin Salisbury, who was never in the BPP but was a black militant at the time and later was an important political prisoner. He was the one that said, "You know, organizations come and go, but the people are always there and the people are our

promise." Now he was in the Young Lords organization at one point, when he got out of prison, because he was a black Puerto Rican. The point he's making as I understand it—and I thought about it for years and years afterwards—is that these organizations are not meant to live permanently, they're simply tools to get liberation. It's the masses that have to move, not the political party. Then there were things with women. There were always women in the organization. The Panthers were much more in advance, in fact, than most of the organizations of the day. That's something no one wants to admit. When they criticize the BPP, they're criticizing, at that stage, the most advanced organization. They were the first ones to come out in favor of the gay revolution. There were no other black organizations that did that, in fact I don't think many still have.

**JoNina:** Well, of course, there were a lot



*The campaign to free Huey Newton*



of black organizations that were against gay rights.

**Lorenzo:** ...and against Women's Liberation. So they made a number of mistakes there. But you have to look at that within the context of the time. So, I think really, in my mind, that was less of a problem. I'm not minimizing. I'm sure you wouldn't allow me to do that-no way! Women were not common enough in leadership roles, but if you look at them in comparison to the black movement organizations and the Civil Rights organizations... you know they were head and shoulders above it. Dr. King's organization had a terrible reputation for sexism and womanizing. Now SNCC had the best reputation over the roles women had, especially in the late stages.

**JoNina:** There was a struggle within SNCC too, about that whole question. About female leadership. All the organizations went through it at some time.

**Lorenzo:** So I think those areas are important. But in my estimation because they had abroad based organization with community support they could have resisted. I believe, I've always believed, that they could have resisted the pressure. What do you think?

**JoNina:** Well, yeah, I think if the structure had been different. I also think look at the state repression, what was done to destroy the organization. We did not understand how much repression we were going to get by telling the black community it should defend itself against the power structure. Even with our community survival programs, J. Edgar Hoover, head of the FBI, at one point he said that out of all our activity our 'Breakfast Program' was the most subversive.

Subversive! We were feeding kids! J. Edgar Hoover was a racist, but he wasn't crazy. He understood the power of what we were doing in terms of radicals feeding hungry children. That was a really dangerous program, and that was one of the programs that the FBI 'went out to sabotage. [At its height the BPP Breakfast program fed 10,000 kids a day.]

We did not have a complete understanding of what scale of confrontation we were entering with the state at that stage already. We had these agents provocateurs sent in to disrupt us. We'd let anybody walk in off the street to join, so in came these infiltrators and paid informants. I think that was one of our main errors. We were young, we were basically kids, we didn't know. That just made it easier for the Counter-Intelligence Program to destroy us. I think that in the present day and time you have to do a lot more in terms of assessing people when they come to join you.

## How to Avoid Repression

*From the extreme experiences that you and your organization have been through, what do you think is the best way to deal with this problem of infiltration? I understand that the attempts to deal with it within the Black Panther Party led to so much in-fighting and recrimination that that, in itself, split the organization as much as the infiltration.*

**Lorenzo:** I think, accountability within the organization. So that if someone is saying something, or someone is doing something, then there has to be some procedure in place to make them come forward and make it public to the entire membership of an organization or chapter. Also there has to be some kind of procedure so that you know a very basic thing-that is to know who's in and who's out of the organization. People will come up and say they're part of this and that and they'll set up an organization or chapter, and you won't even know who the hell they are or what their real intentions are.

So, I think what is really important is to

have accountability within the organization. Have broad based coalitions that are accountable to the community as well as to the masses in the organization itself.

I think one of the weaknesses of this idea that if you create this tightly structured organization you resist political penetration-that comes out of the Leninist politics-I think it was proven with the Panthers and others that that's not necessarily the case. It's much more possible to isolate you and just destroy you. You don't have any assurances just because you've got an organization, a supposedly tight leadership and this, that and the other, that you're safe. No, they can come in. Even though it had the appearance of a tight organization people could come in and set up chapters! Can go from one place to another.

If there are contradictions inside the organization, air them; they cannot be allowed to fester. You have to make it a policy-you've something to say about somebody, bring it forward and make it public. And then if that person continues to do that then they have to be expelled:

**JoNina:** Also, just to have more demo-

cratic procedures.

**Lorenzo:** Yeah, that is part of it. You've got to have democratic procedures, but you've also got to have the ability to get rid of these people when you find that you do have enemy agents. You know, because some people will say, "You're expelling this person. Why, he's a good person. I've seen him doing..." You have to explain to them why you do it. You have to have procedures in place to do this. I mean, it's not a chore that's pleasurable.

**JoNina:** But, you know, in the Black Panther Party you could be expelled. One week you may be a really loyal, faithful member of the Party thinking you're doing a really good job and two weeks later you could see your picture on the front of the Panther paper saying: "Expelled for life: Enemy of the people". There might have been some cases when in fact these people were, in fact agents, but they were not government agents all the time.

**Lorenzo:** I think there are some things that are just basic to organization, such as being sure everything's done above board, being

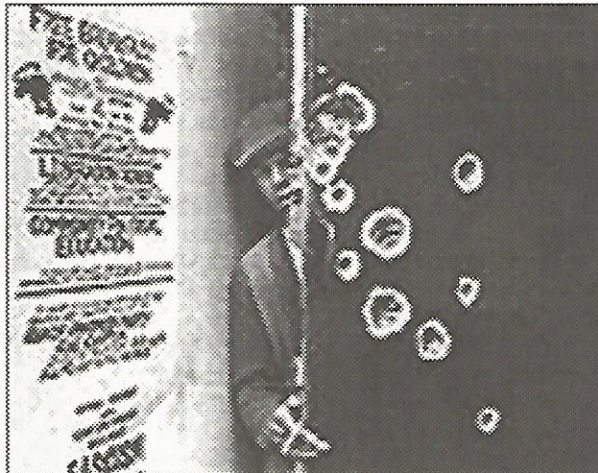
sure you've got accountability in the organization, being sure you've got basic unity and mutual respect. You know some of these things are pretty obvious. There are going to be people coming in with bad blood and, to be quite honest, there's going to be conflict, but there has to be a method that you've created inside your organization that can diffuse certain kinds of conflict. Otherwise you've got

serious problems. Serious problems. It will split you right down the middle and if it doesn't do that, it will crush your organization.

## Seattle and White Anarchists

*I wanted to know your views on recent events like Seattle. What do you think of the white anarchist movement in America and across Europe? Where do you see black groups in America going in the next five years?*

**Lorenzo:** The Seattle demonstration, the success of it, even the coalition, was very surprising. I don't necessarily see that as the way. Firstly there's the question of longevity-is it going to last more than a year or two, even that far? Secondly, in the inner cities most of the people there are black and brown and we



Oakland police shoot up Black Panther offices



don't see them as of yet. It's more than just a question of involving black people in the actual events, but also understanding that the same forces responsible for the debt and the impoverishment of 'Third World' countries are the same people who are responsible for the deterioration of the black community and the inner cities of the United States. They're responsible for mass homelessness; they are responsible for the unemployment that is bedeviling the inner cities of the United States. We also think there's weaknesses in terms of them being primarily middle class—even though they're progressive—they haven't got a working class base, white or black.

It was evident in Seattle that there was some union participation, more than there was in Washington DC which was just almost totally youth. In Washington DC—which is 85% black—the demo was almost entirely white. They had not raised the issues, which allowed them to connect with black working class people. These things are going to be a noose around their neck if they don't understand that they have to revise their politics and be more inclusive. Black people are not going to come and join that movement unless there are genuine attempts to correct those deficiencies. Having said this, the fact is that these kids are in the streets, fighting with the fuckin' police with an anti-capitalist perspective. This does remind me of the old Panther politics. They're broader in the sense that there are much larger numbers and they are an open coalition—which I don't think we could have afforded to have done back then. Obviously, we'll see the effect on the situation when the secret police penetrates further—we'll see. Right now, we can just say, it's remarkable to see the success rate at this stage.

Then there's the question of the idea of the anarchist movement. You know for over twenty-five years I've been critical of the anarchist movement for its failure to involve itself in the struggles of blacks or other peoples of color. Anarchism has some strengths in terms of its theories, in its grassroots organizing style—which many movements can use and jump off with. Certainly some of that has been reflected in the Seattle movement. It also has some real serious problems in its inability to interact with peoples of color. I've seen everything from outright racism to condescension and pandering and everything in between. I've experienced that in my dealings with the anarchist movement in the States especially. One example is when I was working with *Love and Rage*, and I had submitted a written proposal, to allow us to build a semi-autonomous people of color organization within it. I received severe censure and chastisement by the main movers in that organization. I had to quit it. Same thing happened with the *Industrial Workers of the World* which I was part of, which is not alleged-

ly an anarchist organization but has a majority membership of anarcho-sindicalist types. I felt the same thing, I wrote a proposal for black/people of color workers organizing group to bring in workers of color and broaden the agenda of the IWW and of course this was rejected as separatism.

## Community Organizing

**Lorenzo:** I have these kinds of experiences, which have taught me that it's important for us to organize autonomously. We won't have to put up with this sort of garbage if we can organize autonomously. As an autonomous formation with our own base of strength in the black community, then we can deal with other organizations from a position of strength and get respect for our positions. That's just one of the realities. Or we can, if we so choose, stay in the community and just organize there and leave the white anarchists to their thing.

Now what we've done, we've created an organization, the *Black Autonomy Network of Community Organizers*, which is for sure a formative organization. However we think we've got potential to really reach deep into the black community with a practical program in addition to just a set of ideas. Another weakness with the movement is that it's got analysis with paralysis. It's got political ideas but it doesn't have a practical program to do grassroots work. So you therefore wind up with a bunch of white kids or some other youth base from the petit bourgeoisie. We think we've got a chance to build working class black and non-white support. We think we can reach in around the issues that are really important—the day-to-day issues of poor working class people. We can build that kind of alliance. But we can also come out of the community and raise issues that other forces outside will unite around. It's important to recognize, just as the Panthers did, that although issues might begin in the black community, they don't terminate in the black community. The point is to recognize there can be autonomy on the one hand (certainly for the black struggle and the women's struggle)—and at the same time there can be class unity.

The left doesn't mean shit in this period. The Black Nationalist movement doesn't mean shit in this period—they just represent a very small number of people, they're petit bourgeoisie to the core. Our approach has to be instead of worrying about all this garbage, do community work, win the people and all the other bullshit will fall into place. All of that really doesn't matter. And you know, our

thing is to try and reach into the black masses, lift their level of consciousness. Grab a hold of them and bring them into the work that we're doing around practical things. Things that really affect them—food, housing, stopping police brutality. This is what we're attempting to do. It has not been easy to get in a position to even build a strong group. We're trying to do that, it will happen. We think we'll break out of this whole stage. You know, it's the kind of stage the Black Panther Party found itself in too, at one time being one of a number of Black Power formations. It was able to break out of that. I think we'll be able to do that as well.

**JoNina:** I think one of the lessons... one of the things that Huey Newton used to talk about was that in the black community you really can't just be concerned with a political ideology. You really have to have programs that meet the concrete needs of people: food, clothing, housing, shelter, whatever. If you have that, then people can relate to you. If all you have is an ideology it's irrelevant to them. They're not going to deal with it. I think that was very important. Poor people, working class people, they want to know, "What kind of program do you have that will help me keep the police off my back, get a better school for my kids put food on the table, find me a job". Other than, that and you're irrelevant to the black community and you might as well not waste your time.

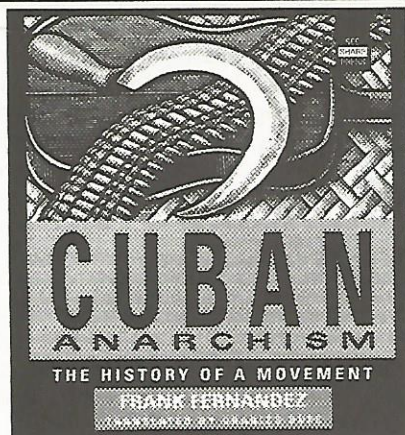


**Black Panther's free breakfast program for kids**

You can contact **JoNina and Lorenzo c/o Black Autonomy News Service, PO Box 19962, Kalamazoo, MI 49019; Tel: (616) 337-7653;** for news on the activity of ex-Panthers and prisoners of war read **It's About Time... Newsletter.** For copies send a donation in dollars to: **It's About Time Committee & Black Panther Party Alumni Committee, PO Box 22110, Sacramento, CA 95822.**

*This is an edited version of an interview taken from: YearZero Issue 3, \$4 from: YearZero, PO Box 26276, London W3 7GQ, UK. Web: <http://members.freespeech.org/yearzero> Email: [yearzero@flashmail.com](mailto:yearzero@flashmail.com)*





## **Cuban Anarchism: The History of a Movement**

by Frank Fernandez  
See Sharp Press, 2000

-- reviewed by danielarturo

*Cuban Anarchism: The History of a Movement* is the long awaited elaboration of Fernandez' 1987 essay, "Cuba: the Anarchists and Liberty." The book recounts the history of the Cuban labor movement through its inception in the 1850's, to the overthrow of the Batista regime by Fidel Castro and the 26th of July Movement, and the subsequent neutralization of the Cuban anarchist movement on the island. The book deals with many issues still much debated within anarchist circles, notably the issues of national liberation struggles, the role of anarchists in authoritarian revolutionary movements, and the Cuban Revolution itself. I found that Fernandez put his energy into three interrelated "projects" in this book: (1) to recover the eclipsed history of the Cuban anarchist movement, so centrally tied to the history of the Cuban labor movement; (2) to recount the central problems of the Cuban Revolution, particularly in its institutionalized form after 1959; (3) to relate the often contradictory reaction of the international anarchist movement to allegations made by Cuban anarchists about Fidel Castro's government and the situation in Cuba.

Fernandez does an excellent job piecing together the first decades of Cuba's anarchist movement. The great migration of Spanish workers to the island during the last half of the 19th century brought an influx of radical ideas that were then finding fertile soil among the Spanish working class. The first Proudhonian mutualist societies were founded by the end of the 1850's, and by the 1880's there were several explicitly anarchist labor newspapers and workers associations. By the end of the 80's anarchist-organized strikes shook the tobacco industry, both in Cuba, and in Key West and

Tampa, where many Cuban laborers migrated to find work.

The 1890's were a complicated period for Cuba's anarchists, who struggled over support for the independence movement and Jose Marti's Cuban Revolutionary Party. In 1892, Cuban Anarchists held a conference in which they voted support for the independence movement, understood as only a step in the direction of social revolution. This position continued to be controversial among the anarchists, some of whom bitterly opposed the separatist struggle as a total waste of time for working people who would go on to trade a foreign master for a local master. This debate was echoed on the international level where the Reclus brothers and Malatesta, among others, supported Cuban independence, while Emma Goldman and Peter Kropotkin remained neutral.

Although the anarchists continued to be a central influence within the broader labor movement on the island, their influence waned considerably after the 1930's, when Batista put the trade-union confederation in the hands of the PCC (the Cuban Communist Party) making it dependant to his government. Attempts to make an independent trade union along libertarian lines failed.

Anarchists participated in the armed struggle against the Batista dictatorship, both within and outside of the 26th of July Movement (M26J), of which the young bourgeois politician Fidel Castro was *comandante en jefe*. However, soon after the rebels' victory on the 1st of January, 1959, things began to look ominous for Cuba's libertarians. The new government expelled leading anarcho-syndicalists from several unions where they had much influence, notably the food workers, construction, and transport unions of the Confederation of Cuban Workers. By the end of 1960, the Confederation was made an organ of the Cuban government, ending the last vestiges of independent union organizing. Much like the early years of the Soviet Union, as the new government consolidated itself, it began to eliminate opposition, which of course increasingly included the anarchists. Newspapers and journals were suppressed, militants were jailed as "counter-revolutionaries," and options grew scarce for Cuban anarchists. Some went into exile, joining the expropriated bourgeoisie in Miami; others took up armed struggle against the new government. Many were subsequently jailed or forced into hiding.

Fernandez spends considerable time recounting the experience of the exiled Cuban anarchists, particularly in relation to the larger international anarchist community, which in large part continued to uncritically support the openly (after early 1961) Marxist-Leninist government. Cuba's exiled libertarians were con-

stantly on the defensive throughout the 60's and 70's, forced to defend their own experiences with the increasingly repressive government that forced them into exile. The international revolutionary community, including, sadly, a great many anarchists, did not want to believe that the righteous Cuban Revolution, which against all odds defeated an U.S.-backed dictator and which continued to struggle against the United States itself, could be guilty of being as repressive and authoritarian as the Cuban anarchists insisted. It certainly did not help that the loudest voices decrying Castro's authoritarianism were precisely those hypocritical authoritarian right-wing capitalists who were the reason for the revolution in the first place.

Fernandez has definitely done his research. He has seemingly tracked down and read every libertarian labor newspaper, pamphlet, meeting minutes, and flyer ever published on the island. Although this vast access to historical data particularly enriches the early chapters, it also proves problematic as Fernandez bogs us down in the minutiae of details of little interest to most readers. At the same time Fernandez misses questions which are of interest to many readers, questions of broader trends in the history of Cuban anarchism. He barely addresses issues of strategy, theory, or the relationship of urban workers to rural workers (he barely mentions the countryside at all, which is strange as Cuba is overwhelmingly rural).

My main problems with this book stem from what I believe to be Fernandez's tendency to lose all ability to formulate an effective argument when the issue of the Cuban Revolution comes up. In contrast to other anarchist critiques of "communist" regimes, notably Berkman's *The Russian Tragedy*, Fernandez seems to go well out of his way to paint the most damning picture of life after the Revolution as possible, often making questionable statements or relying on unprovable allegations.

The facts, when clearly laid out, are damning enough, but Fernandez cannot seem to resist making his case weaker by pushing it so hard. Unfortunately, this may make people discount what he has to say on the subject. Lines like "The desire to escape from this great dungeon that Cuba had become was an obsession for almost all Cubans" go towards discrediting his account of the situation at the time, and show a lack of understanding of why people may have wanted to stay in Cuba, and why so many people did support Castro's government, particularly in the early years. In fact, he goes on to contradict himself when he later admits that the government had "great popular backing." When strikes organized by the anarchists fail, multiple reasons are given, but when organized by M26J, the failure is "proof" that the movement had no base

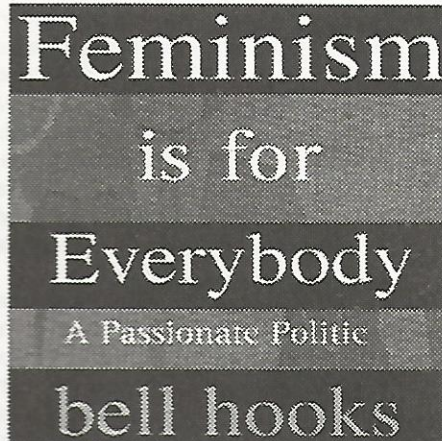


among the working class. Uncritical allegations of "Marxist indoctrination centers" and international Marxist conspiracies further erode his argument.

All writing is partisan. There is no such thing as neutrality, especially in writing history, but not all historical writing is equally obscured by one's partisan perspective. Writers willing to be more critical of themselves and of the movements to which they belong, as well as of their enemies, create more valuable work in that they allow readers a more nuanced understanding of the historical issues at play. The Cuban government has an incredible propaganda apparatus at its disposal. In order to effectively combat this, one needs to be as precise as possible. Unfortunately Fernandez is at his weakest when critiquing the present government.

This book comes at an important time, for Fidel Castro, nearing 80, will not be *comandante en jefe* too much longer. The Cuban people must soon decide how they will organize their lives, work, and communities in a post-Castro era. By bringing this rich, but suppressed history out of the closet, and by reviving historical memory, Fernandez takes the first step in renewing anarchism as a historical possibility for the Cuban people.

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***Feminism Is For Everybody***  
by bell hooks; South End Press, 2000

-- reviewed by Stas

bell hooks is one of the most prominent and well respected feminist academics and authors in the United States. She is often the subject of study by college students and academics, as well as a frequent guest on talk shows and other mass media. Her work in feminist theory has been groundbreaking, yet it is

often limited to academic, literary, and other elite circles. *Feminism Is For Everybody* is hooks' attempt to create a quick, simple primer on feminist history, theory, and politics to the masses who receive a misinformed, misunderstood, and maligned version of feminism. To that end, she has written an easy to read, concise book which documents her experiences as a feminist activist and academic.

Whether hooks identifies herself as an anarchist or not, much of what I found in the book seemed to reflect an anarchist analysis of social movements, interpersonal interaction, and domination. The book begins with a brief statement of feminist political positions, then discusses some history of the movement. It is here where I first found hooks' critique of the movement to mirror some anarchist concepts. She discusses the change in the movement from personal, decentralized consciousness raising groups to the establishment of large, centralized organizations working for the benefit of middle class white women under the banner of women's rights. It is clear that hooks holds a preference for the former. Implicit is the belief that these groups could form a larger movement that could challenge sexism and patriarchy while still allowing space for women to be themselves without having to adopt a party line which may not benefit them directly. This appears to me to be not unlike the affinity group structure preferred by so many anarchists today.

This critique of the changes in feminist movement structure leads to a critique of classism and racism within the feminist movement. hooks views the formation of large organizations as the beginning of a stage where the movement took on the role of empowering white, middle class women at the expense of women of color and working class women. While the early fight for women's equality in the workplace was a necessity because women were entering the workforce in greater numbers, the ultimate result was the inclusion of privileged women into a white supremacist, patriarchal hierarchy. She is also quick to point out that many middle class feminists benefit financially from the exploitation of working class women who, in theory, are their sisters in feminist struggle. Clearly, this is not the notion of equality that many feminists strive for.

The beneficiaries of the feminist movement have by far been white women. Much of hooks' critique of the success of the movement has been its co-optation by white supremacist, patriarchal capitalism. The women who have benefitted the most from its success have been white women because it is easier to incorporate them into the white supremacist notion of mainstream America than women of color. As with class privilege, hooks sharply critiques white women who have empowered

themselves at the expense of women of color. Once again, the movement is set back by the co-optation of some of its members.

hooks presents feminist struggle as the struggle against domination. Whether it is patriarchal violence in the home (committed by both men and women) as a tool of control of romantic partners or children, the imposition of sexual morality upon others, the limitation of women's ability to control their own bodies (in terms of both general health care and reproductive rights), or the imposition of class and race based exploitation; hooks presents all of these features of modern society as stemming from sexist notions of domination. While there are some anarchists who would disagree with this analysis of the origins of inequality and domination, it is hard to argue against the notion that these forms of domination do not constitute a serious threat to the freedom of individuals, especially women.

I do have some minor criticisms of this book: while I understand the fact that hooks is attempting to write a basic primer on feminism for people who are unfamiliar with its basic principles and ideas, it's unfortunate that most of the secondary material in the book comes from herself. As she points out, there is a wide variety of feminist literature out there and the book could have been a great showcase for other works that people new to feminist ideas could look into for further insight. Also, although I understand that it stems from her own cultural biases, the section on feminist spirituality seemed somewhat unnecessary. Despite the fact that it points out feminist critique of male dominated religion, as an unabashed atheist I find myself in the camp of people who view the appropriation of religion as distracting and self-serving. However, I can appreciate an individual's desire to reach spiritual enlightenment, so I was not too turned off by the portion of the book dedicated to spirituality.

*Feminism Is For Everybody* is highly recommended for people who are either new to feminist thought or want to gain a better understanding of its basic principle. It is also a good introduction to bell hooks' writing and ideas. Her notion of feminism is one that could easily be incorporated into an anarchist politic because it is focused on issues of domination which go beyond sex and gender. hooks presents a critique of all forms of domination stemming from a feminist understanding of gender and sexual inequality that must be incorporated into anarchist critiques of social relations between individuals, social structures, and the state.

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# CHARLOTTE WILSON ANARCHIST ESSAYS

EDITED BY NICOLAS WALTER

**Charlotte M. Wilson's  
Anarchist Essays,**

Nicolas Walter, ed; Freedom Press 2000

-- reviewed by S.H.

This slim volume of eleven essays, edited by the recently deceased Nicolas Walter of England's Freedom Press, is an important new addition to the body of anarchist works originating from the turn of the century period that boasts such thinkers as Kropotkin, Elisee Reclus, etc. Although at times a little redundant, as Wilson tried to rephrase certain key ideas about authority, property, work, etc, towards different audiences, her essays are thoughtful and clear, and in some cases foreshadowed essays by other more well known thinkers, such as Kropotkin. "Justice" (1885), for example, was a precursor to Kropotkin's "Organized Vengeance called Justice" (1900).

Little known in U.S. anarchist circles, and overlooked by anarchist historians in general, Charlotte Wilson essentially introduced anarchist-communism to an English audience. With her close comrade Peter Kropotkin, she founded *Freedom* in 1886- still England's longest running anarchist paper - and she was its primary editor and publisher for over eight years. She was also involved in establishing anarchist discussion groups in London and encouraging other local groups, and was an active lecturer and debater. Interestingly, she was the model for characters in a number of political novels, including *A Girl Among the Anarchists* and John Henry Mackay's *The Anarchists* where she is most commonly described as a "little woman dressed becomingly in black."

Having been highly educated even for men's standards, she proceeded to become more politicized -- the highly public trials of the French anarchists (including Kropotkin) in 1883 seemed to be the catalyst for Wilson's acceptance of both Socialism and Anarchism as her own ideology. Wilson worked within the sphere of middle class intellectuals in the Fabian Society, which was a reformist oriented socialist organization, and finally split with them when they formally chose a parliamentary path. Her "anarchist faction" within the Society, which fellow Fabian member George

Bernard Shaw called a "sort of influenza of Anarchism which soon spread through the society," was to have long lasting effects. When Kropotkin was released from prison in 1886, Wilson invited him to come to Britain to join the "circle of English anarchists" that had formed the

previous year. The group decided to produce a new anarchist paper once they split from the Fabian Society and so began *Freedom* and the Freedom press, attracting such contributors as Jean Grave, Louise Michel, Dyer D. Lum, and Errico Malatesta.

For Wilson, anarchism was a specific tenet within Socialism which fell opposite the "collectivist" Socialist viewpoint, or State Socialism. [Not to be confused with the collectivist tendency within anarchism advocated by Bakunin, which Wilson also rejected in favor of the "communist-anarchism" made popular by Kropotkin.] Her "What Socialism Is" points out these differences convincingly, making the anarchist argument by stressing the "individual as well as social, internal as well as external" context in which radical change must occur. Though her language is steeped in the optimism of the Enlightenment, and one would begin to think her views on industry and work might also fall under that faith in scientific order, happily she is critical of this view saying:

*"...all coercive organization working with machine-like regularity is fatal to the realization of this idea [that labor could become a pleasure]. It has never proved possible to perfectly free human beings to co-operate spontaneously with the precision of machines. Spontaneity, or artificial order and symmetry must be sacrificed. And as spontaneity is life, and the order and symmetry of any given epoch only the forms in which life temporarily clothes itself, Anarchists have no fears that in discarding the Collectivist dream of the scientific regulation of industry, and inventing no formulas for social conditions as yet unrealized, they are neglecting the essential for the visionary."*

Unique in her analysis is the emphasis on the psychological aspects of oppression as well as the material. The "inward attitude of slavish adoration" towards authority is one way this is manifested, which she elaborates on in "Freedom"; also in "Anarchism," she asks: "After the annihilation of the oppressive institutions of the present, what social forces and social conditions will remain, and how are they likely to be modified and developed?" putting emphasis again on the psychology of power and the importance of social pressures in the development of individuals and society.

Similarly, she acknowledges public opinion, the "common moral sense of [human]kind" in its ideal form, as a powerful social pressure which will have to be utilized in favor of positive social change: "For a radical change must have come over opinion as to the nature of property and public duty before the Revolution can succeed."

On violence, similar to other anarchist-communists of the time, Wilson stated: "The employment of force to coerce others is unjustifiable: but as a means of escaping from coercion, if it is available when other means have failed, it is not only excusable, it is a moral obligation." Her words are worthy of analysis in the contemporary, though enduring, discussion over violence as a tactic in a revolutionary context. Readers may find her language, like other propagandists of her time, verbose and at times dotted with obscure Classical references but editor Nicolas Walter included valuable notes at the end of the book which shed light on these mysterious things for those of us in the 21st century.

What can be rightfully criticized in Wilson's writings is a Euro-centric worldview that rears its ugly head every so often. Her references to the "civilized world" obviously refer to the industrialized Western world and make no value judgment, but they do infer a colonial mindset and racism, such as when she states "...power, [...] that is the veil which hides Freedom from the eyes of men. Sometimes it takes the form of the blind fear of a savage of his "medicine" or his fetish, sometimes of the equally blind reverence of an English workman for the law of his masters..." Beyond her archaic language is her belief in humanity's need to break free from oppression universally, as when she states: "Freedom is the necessary preliminary to any true and equal human association." "The vitiating of social life is produced by the domination of man by man. The spirit of domination is the disintegrating element which constantly tending to break up society, is the fundamental cause of confusion and disorder."

Convinced that we already have the capabilities to live free from authority - found in the fraternity of social bonds - Charlotte Wilson said that anarchism was "not a Utopian dream of the future, but a faith for the present," in that its humble first aim "is to assert and make good the dignity of the individual human being." Yet, "Its one purpose is by direct personal action to bring about a revolution in every department of human existence, social, political and economic. Every man owes it to himself and to his fellows to be free."

**Charlotte Wilson's Anarchist Essays can be ordered from AK Press by writing to:**

674-A 23rd St., Oakland, CA 94612-1163  
<http://www.akpress.org>



## ***Days of War, Nights of Love: Crimethink for Beginners***

by the CrimethInc. Workers Collective  
-- reviewed by Alex F.

*Days of War, Nights of Love* is likely the most interesting piece of revolutionary thought to be published since the Antagonism reprint of *Eclipse and Re-Emergence of the Communist Movement*. It is sharp, intelligent and very entertaining. The graphic work is amazing, and the pieces are well written. However, tho the pieces are often inspiring in their exuberance and revolutionary fervor, the theory contained in it falls short in many respects.

I knew I was going to have trouble when one of the first things I read when I picked up the book was a bit explaining that readers should apply the exclamation-point test to everything in the book. That is: it is suggested that the reader test the texts by putting an exclamation point at the end of each sentence, and if the sentence doesn't make any sense with the exclamation point the reader should probably ignore it. This sort of knee-jerk anti-intellectualism is the kind of behavior that has held back revolutionary theoretical development. The fact is capitalism is very complex in many ways. To try and pretend that talking about it is always going to be the most exciting thing is to undermine the possibility of understanding what we're up against.

But the most important problem with the book is the strand of postmodernist philosophy that underlies much of what is said. That is: the assumption seems to be that capitalism has achieved complete hegemony, and that any struggle we face is in some sense connected to that hegemony. This is, of course, based in the thought of postmodern "Marxists" who, contrary to Marx, upheld the Second International capital-centric model of understanding capitalism, neglecting the perspective, subjectivity, self-activity and self-valorization of the working class. This perspective also neglects dialectics, and thus can only enable a sort of revolutionary puritanism that runs thru much of the book.

This perspective is also, I think, the source behind the retreat from class and the anthropomorphization of capitalism I find in the book. There is this notion present which makes capitalism into this sort of self-motivating / self-motivated creature which we all must struggle against. Of course, there is a grain of truth in this: the primary source of problems in capitalist society is capitalist social relations (hierarchy, sexism, racism, etc.), which are an extension and intensification of the social relations that were prevalent in every class society prior to capitalism. However, the problem here is that capitalism is not a being. It does not exist outside of human ideas and actions. This ultimately

means that the problems can "be traced to class conflict alone". That is: capitalism is the result of the purposeful activities of a very small class of people who have done the best they can to get the rest of us to do all the work, etc. There is a "they", and they are very real. It is true, there is no "secret society of evil geniuses", but there doesn't have to be, instead we have: states, corporate boards, the WTO, the UN, etc. These are the decision-making bodies of the ruling class.

As far as do "they possess a clear understanding of the... conditions to which they are contributing", you only have to spend a few days reading *Fortune Magazine*, the *Wall Street Journal* and other such rags to find out that: yes, in general, they do. They may not all understand every permutation of their actions, such as how they perpetuate racism, but they understand most. And continue happily, while laughing all the way to the bank.

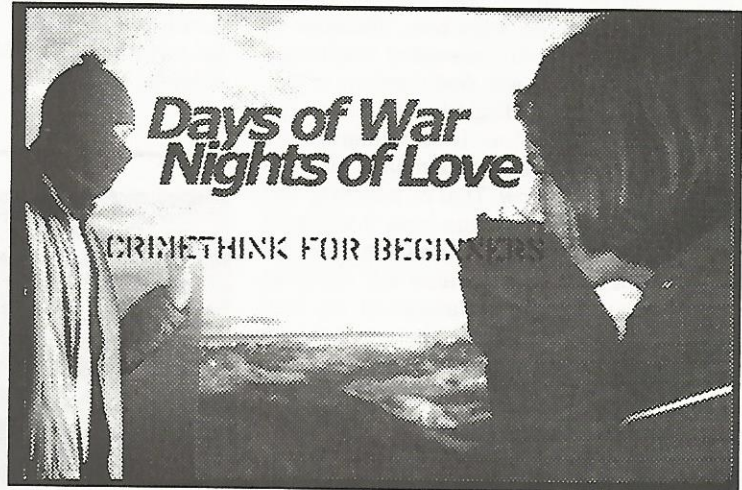
It is not a matter of stirring up hatred, but of trying to understand how capitalism works. And capitalism is class struggle. It is, unfortunately, a struggle between human beings. No amount of the humanist gloss this book tries to paint over this fact can obscure it, and it only serves to put us in a theoretical and, ultimately, tactical disadvantage. The fact is: the ruling class would kill us before giving up their power and privilege, and it is very unlikely that appeals to a common humanity will overcome this.

Which brings us to another puzzling thing: the section on the "Bourgeoisie". I've always understood "bourgeoisie" to be another word for ruling class. In this section, however, we follow a working class man and woman thru how they are duped into producing / reproducing capitalism, but then are told that they are somehow "bourgeois". This belies the fact that capitalism has always been based on the working class being either tricked and/or forced into producing and reproducing it. The working class is, in that way, an entity that exists inside of capitalism. But since we also cannot achieve liberation while enslaved as such, we also exist against it. This is why we are the contradiction of capitalism: it needs us, but we don't need it, and in fact constantly, either consciously or unconsciously, struggle against it.

This section on the "Bourgeoisie" also holds an example of the puritanism and elitism that runs thru the book. It creates the

pure model of the duped working class couple, rejects them based on how they have been duped by calling them "bourgeois", while either purposefully obfuscating the fact that no such couple really exists or allowing their own blindness to this fact. All working class people, consciously or unconsciously, resist capitalism every day. They slack, goof off, steal, fight back against sexist / racist / homophobic behavior, organize, etc. No one is completely dominated. This is just another postmodernist myth.

This is what separates Debord from Baudrillard: Baudrillard creates this notion of capitalist hegemony via simulacrum, while Debord shows that capitalism is not hegemonic and that there is an ongoing battle for a way out: class war. This is the ruling class capital-centric notion of capitalism (Baudrillard) vs. a proletarian class-based notion of capitalism (Debord). And I'm with Debord on this,



because working class people are not simply objects that the ruling class acts on, but active subjects struggling for our liberation.

Another problem in *Days of War, Nights of Love* is the out-of-hand rejection of "history." I find this disturbing because their definition of "history" only acknowledges it as a category of study and not as a matter of experiences.

The book seems to fall back on the notion that tribal peoples experience/d time cyclically. This is a gross oversimplification, of which primitivists (such as John Zerzan) are also guilty. Pre-Civilizational people experienced time in a relatively linear fashion, much like we do, in that they acknowledged that there is a starting point: birth, and an endpoint: death. Between these two points myriads of things happen, which are all experienced in different ways. Just because I experience time moving faster and slower does not mean time is not moving in a linear fashion.

However, the truth in the cyclical notion lies in the fact that many Pre-Civilizational people understood that things in nature, such as seasons, do move in a relatively cyclical fashion



and thus there are connecting points thruout time's linear march. So, it seems more appropriate to say that Pre-Civilizational people viewed time like a side-ways spring: simultaneously cyclical and linear.

Another problem with the book's expressed view of history is that it ignores that history is nothing more than the collectivizations of the experience of people. In a way, the view of history in this book is guilty of solipsistic fallacy in that it expresses and invites the reader to understand a view that can only be understood from an individual perspective. This tacit denial of the other is extremely problematic.

An aspect of the conception of history given in this book is the oversimplification in section "H", which rejects history as "authoritarian" since it is something we cannot have control over. The simple, and perhaps unfortunate, fact is that we are the products of history in that we cannot have any control over the world before we were born. Because of this, it is important to understand how things came to be as they are. And it seems to me, then, that understanding all of this does not have to be restrictive (authoritarian), but instead can supply us with a means for dealing with the world now. That is: how they hell can we propose to change now, if we don't understand what now is, and how we got here. Without history we also are removed from the successes and failures of the past (both collective and individual), and would thus be doomed to repeat the mistakes.

"Stepping out of history" seems to me a nice fantasy, but only if "history" is understood as some oppressive force weighing above us. Instead, it seems to me, now is nothing but past and future possibilities contained in a slipping instant. Without understanding the past, future possibilities and how they are contained in the expansive now, history is meaningless, and becomes nothing but another shackle, another prison in which we are trapped: coming from nowhere, going nowhere.

These kind of nihilistic / puritanical attacks on history get us nowhere. The puritanism contained in "wiping the slate clean" is just another trap, since it doesn't acknowledge the free agency over time of multiple human actors, and instead creates a notion of pure humanity that is, at best, solipsism.

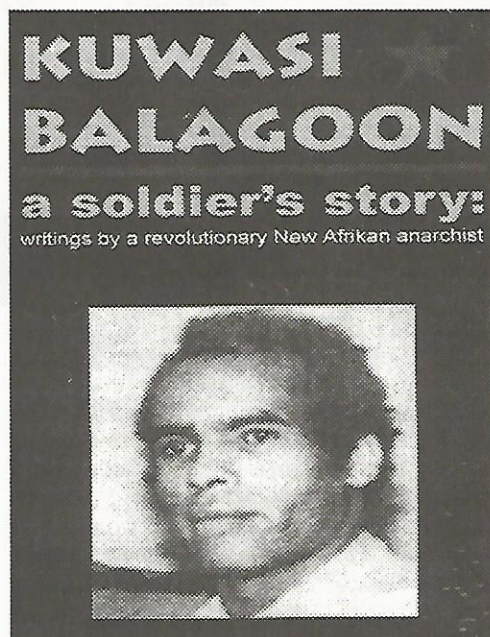
Another aspect of this rejection of history (and one which shows the roots this kind of thinking has in the bourgeois thought of post-modernists) is the tacit support it gives to capitalist ahistoricism. That is: capitalism, in order to justify its existence, must convince people that "it has always been this way, and will always be this way". This is an overt denial of history (since it obviously has not

always been this way), which is rooted in the same kind of solipsistic (bourgeois) individualism (exemplified in the writings of Ayn Rand) that denies collectivity, let alone collective human experience.

Time is the space between birth and death. Collectively this makes up "history". Thus, the denial of time, the denial of history, is, itself, another "concealment of death". It is important to understand this. Denying time (and thus history) ultimately means creating another simulation of life, and thus destroys prospects for living. Pretending something doesn't exist does not equal liberation from it. In fact, it only ensures further slavery.

At any rate, I do recommend that people read this book. In spite of the shortcomings I've dealt with here (and others I didn't have the space or time to deal with), it is well worth the time and energy to read it. You will have fun.

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**Kuwasi Balagoon:  
A Soldier's Story  
Writings by a Revolutionary  
New Afrikan Anarchist  
Solidarity Publishing 2001**

-- reviewed by Steve Swart

Since my arrest in Philadelphia during the Republican National Convention\*, I

have been trying to read more about people who have lived and endured incredible sacrifices in hopes of contributing to revolutionary social change. It has really allowed me to put my situation in perspective, and gain a lot of strength to keep pushing forward. I had begun to read both a biography on Durruti and Harriet Tubman, when I received a copy of *Kuwasi Balagoon: A Soldier's Story*. Having already anticipated it after reading some of Kuwasi Balagoon's writings before, I was excited to have a chance to read more. My thirst was not quenched - by the end, I just wanted to read more.

Trying to uncover the history of the Black Liberation Army (BLA) is not an easy task. Since, to my knowledge, there is no single book that attempts a history of the BLA, you have to piece together a collage of sources to get a good idea of who they were. Solidarity Publishing has provided us with an important part of that collage.

Kuwasi Balagoon: A Soldier's Story is an excellent compilation of his writings. In addition to his articles, statements, and poetry, it also contains several writings about, and in tribute to him, and excerpts from some of his letters.

Kuwasi Balagoon was "a staunch advocate of New Afrikan liberation and eradication of capitalism," as well as an "anarchist and a participant in armed struggle." He was also bisexual, and refused to compromise despite pressure from others in the movement.

While in the U.S. Army during Vietnam he formed "a clandestine direct action group called De Legislators, which set out to punish racist soldiers with beatings or worse." When he came back to North America he became a tenant organizer in Harlem. Later he became "involved with the Black Panther Party for Self Defense, and was one of the 'Panther 21' whom the government attempted (unsuccessfully) to frame in 1969."

When the Black Panther Party fell apart, Kuwasi Balagoon joined the faction that became the Black Liberation Army (BLA). The Black Liberation Army was a formation dedicated to armed struggle for the liberation of New Afrika. New Afrika "is the name applied by one sector of the Black Liberation movement to the colonized nation of Black people in the U.S., which they say has a rightful claim to the land of five states in the South". The BLA engaged in expropriations from banks and armored cars to support community survival programs, attacked killer cops, and rescued freedom fighters from prison. The BLA unit Balagoon was apart of was responsible for the liberation of Assata Shakur from prison.

Kuwasi Balagoon escaped from prison



twice, and was eventually captured after the 1981 Nyack Brinks expropriation attempt. During his trial he remained adamant that he was a prisoner of war and the U.S. had no jurisdiction to try him. He was tried in 1983, and convicted of robbery and murder and sentenced to 75 years in jail. He died in prison as a result of AIDS in 1986.

*A Soldier's Story* begins with a short introduction. The first section is written by other folks in remembrance of Kuwasi Balagoon the person. One of Balagoon's co-defendants, David Gilbert, currently himself a political prisoner, writes:

*When one hears of such courage and sacrifice, the stereotyped image is one of a stern of fierce character, perhaps with an inclination towards martyrdom. But nothing could be further from Kuwasi Balagoon the person. Actually he had an affecting ebullience, a zest for the pleasures of life, and a keen appreciation for the culture and creativity of the people who lived in the ghettos and barrios. Politically, he placed great stress on the need for his movement to respond to the concrete needs of the people in the communities: he opposed anything he saw as hierarchy that stifled initiative from below.*

J. Sakai, author of *Settlers: Mythology of the White Proletariat*, contributes a short piece on the Brinks trial. He ends his piece with some comments on Balagoon's death:

*Of course being Kuwasi, he wouldn't check out of life without a controversy. His death from AIDS in 1986 disrupted patriarchal stereotypes and hypocrisy. One political prisoner who knew him said after his death: "Some people might wish that Kuwasi died a more properly 'revolutionary' death... But AIDS is a scourge of the people, oppressed people... Did Kuwasi get AIDS from his transvestite lover, who he persisted to love and insisted on trusting despite pressure from the rest of us? ...He didn't live by the rules. Not society's, or Christianity's, or Islam's, or feminism's, or the New Afrikan Independence Movement's. But he did have principles and integrity and honesty."*

Through the rest of the booklet you see plenty of evidence.

Some people may wonder why someone would take up arms and face decades in prison for social change. Kuwasi Balagoon's statements in court should give an excellent explanation. Refusing to acknowledge the jurisdiction of the court, he used his open, closing, and sentencing statements to address larger issues - without regard for himself. He blends history and current

events, and effortlessly connects race, class, gender and nation in a practical and powerful way. By the end of his closing statement I was almost in tears.

*I am not going to tell you that the Black Liberation Army's ranks are made up of saints; it is clear that there have been imposters among us who have sold out and are worse the enemies history has pitted us against. And I am not going to tell you that there's no virtue among money couriers or policemen. However, I will tell you now and forever that New Afrikan People have a right to self-determination and that is more important than the lives of Paige, Brown, and O'Grady or Balagoon, Gilbert, and Clark. And it's gonna cost more lives and be worth every life it costs, because the destiny of over thirty million people and the coming generation's rights to land and independence is priceless.*

A thread that runs through many of his articles and letters is the need for revolutionaries, especially anarchists, to break out of their elitist comfort zone. In "Anarchy Can't Fight Alone," Balagoon describes his introduction and interest in nationalism and then anarchism. He then criticizes anarchists for not doing the necessary organizing to make anarchism a reality.

*We permit people of other ideologies to define Anarchy rather than bring our views to the masses and provide models to show the contrary. We permit corporations to not only lay off workers and to threaten the balance of workers while cutting their salaries, but to poison the air and water to boot. We permit the police, Klan and Nazis to terrorize whatever sector of the population they wish without repaying them back in kind. In short, by not engaging in mass organizing and delivering war to the oppressors, we become anarchists in name only.*

Balagoon continues:

*It is beside the point whether Black, Puerto Rican, Native American, and Chicano-Mexicano people endorse nationalism as a vehicle for self-determination or agree with anarchism as being the only road to self-determination. As revolutionaries, we must support the will of the masses. It is not only racism, but compliance with the enemy to stand outside of the social arena and permit America to continue to practice genocide against Third World captive colonies because the although they resist, they don't agree with us. If we truly know that Anarchy is the best way of life for all people, we must promote it, defend it,*

*and know that people who are as smart as we are will accept it. To expect people to accept this, while they are being wiped out as a nation without allies ready to out on the line what they already have on the line is crazy.*

The booklet also contains several of Kuwasi Balagoon's poems and letters. In a similar vein, Balagoon comments:

*...all the rallies have got basically the same people showing up year after year. I ask, do these activists talk to people outside of the movement, obviously they don't talk to people about the movement - we got to build a movement of activists who... address people who are already committed, as well as people who are into other things.*

Throughout all of *A Soldier's Story*, we see how Kuwasi Balagoon is motivated by his love for oppressed people. You also see everywhere how he was not an anarchist "in name only," but puts his trust in the people and acts on his convictions. I recommend that anyone interested in revolutionary social change check this booklet out, as I have only breached the surface.

In a letter written while Kuwasi Balagoon was locked up, he writes:

*As to the seventy-five years, I am not really worried, not only because I am in the habit of not completing sentences or waiting on parole or any of that nonsense, but also because the State simply isn't going to last seventy-five, or even fifty years.*

The best tribute we can pay the man is to bring this dream alive, to heed his advice, to learn from his mistakes, and draw strength from his courage and dedication.

**\* Steve Swart was charged with four charges, including a felony charge of aggravated assault after he was attacked by a police lieutenant during a protest against the racist American criminal justice system. If convicted, Steve could face over ten years in prison. His trial begins in Philadelphia on July 16th. Money for legal defense is desperately needed, and any donations can be made out to Steve Swart, and sent to: Michigan Activist Legal Defense, PO Box 6236, East Lansing, MI 48826.**





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